Final Draft for Review

Helping Justice-Involved Individuals Secure Work that Pays a Living Wage

A Guide for Workforce Development Organizations

June 29, 2018

Helping Justice-Involved Individuals Secure Work that Pays a Living Wage

While it is a challenge for justice-involved individuals to secure employment that matches their interests and pays a sustainable wage, employment and training organizations that serve this population have built up a significant body of knowledge that can be used to successfully connect this hard-to-serve population to the world of work. This guide reviews a broad variety of strategies and techniques that can be used to assist justice-involved individuals secure employment and provides relevant resources that can be used to facilitate the process. It assumes that your organization has the infrastructure needed to support those efforts, such as an active and contributing board of directors, fiscal controls that adhere to generally accepted accounting principles, human resource policies consistent with legal requirements and best practices, and the ability to raise the financial resources needed to support your efforts. Comprehensive guidance in these and other areas of nonprofit management can be found on the website of the [National Council of Nonprofits](#).

The guidance provided in this paper has been divided into seven sections. The first -- ***Using an Integrated Approach that Employs Evidenced-Based Strategies*** -- provides information and resources related to the need for collaboration and the use of evidenced-based practices. These factors are critical to the success of any program that provides workforce development services to justice-involved individuals.

The second section -- ***Implementation Planning --*** describes a set of activities that can be used to put a program into place. The implementation of an employment and training initiative for justice-involved individuals is a challenging endeavor that requires strategic leadership, significant planning, and the careful allocation of resources.

The third section -- ***Recruiting and Assessing Program Participants*** -- offers guidance on the recruitment of eligible applicants for your project. If your project is relatively new, don't assume that suitable candidates will flood your office with requests for assistance. Despite the large number of persons leaving correctional facilities each year and their pressing need for workforce development services, many employment projects have gotten off to a very slow start or failed to achieve their goals because they did not recruit the required number of eligible program participants in a timely way. This section will provide you with the tools needed to rapidly attract and enroll the number of participants you need to make your program successful. It also provides guidance on the vocational assessment process and what can be

done to ensure that every program participant secures training and employment that is matched to their interests and values.

The fourth section -- *Preparing Program Participants for Employment* -- outlines strategies that can be used to prepare justice-involved individuals for job interviews and the world of work. Here you will find many useful and practical tips for motivating program participants, assessing their job readiness and providing them with the knowledge needed to become gainfully employed.

The fifth section -- *Increasing the Effectiveness of your Program's Job Development Efforts* -- describes how you can engage and build long-term partnerships with employers. It covers promotional materials and marketing, strategies for identifying employer needs and managing the job application and interview process, and other time-tested methods for successfully engaging employers in your work.

The sixth section -- *Employment Retention and Career Advancement --* will help you determine the extent to which your project provides its participants with the resources and tools needed to retain a job and pursue long-term career opportunities.

The seventh section – *Planning for Sustainability –* describes eight factors that are critical for sustaining the benefits of your program over time and provides the resources needed to help you address each of these factors.

We hope that this guide will help you achieve your project's objectives and welcome your comments on the strategies and resources it describes.

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Using an Integrated Approach that Employs Evidenced-Based Strategies

The white paper, The Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies Pilot Project: Four Questions Communities Should Consider When Implementing a Collaborative Approach, presents four questions that communities should consider when implementing employment and recidivism reduction strategies for the justice involved population.

Is our leadership committed to a collaborative approach? – Your job development and placement efforts are not likely to gain traction and be successful unless they are well coordinated with criminal justice officials, the local workforce development board, community

Assessing the Effectiveness of Your Collaboration

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory is a no cost tool to assess how your collaboration is doing on 20 research-tested success factors. The inventory takes about fifteen minutes to complete. It can be distributed to a small group of leaders in the collaborative, during a general meeting, or via mail to all members for the most complete picture. You can tally your score manually or online. Take the free online inventory, or register your group to take the online inventory, and receive the group's summary scores for each of the 20 factors.

college administrators, and the leadership of other community-based service organizations. The executive leadership of these organizations must be involved in the planning process for the delivery of employment and training services to this population and serve as champions for your work.

Do we conduct timely risk and needs assessments and job-readiness screenings? – Given the scarcity of resources available for this population, the use of a validated risk assessment and screening tool helps to ensure the right people receive the right services at the right time. An in-depth examination of risk assessments for this population can be found in the white paper, Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness.

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Have we conducted a comprehensive process analysis and inventory of employment services provided pre- and post-release? – Although the level of services required by high risk individuals can be extraordinarily high, you don't want to duplicate existing services. You also want to make sure that these services are coordinated as participants move from correctional facility to the community and provided in a sequence that increases the likelihood of success. For example, the assistance needed to obtain the identity documents required for lawful employment should be provided *prior* to release as should career exploration and job readiness instruction. Justice-involved individuals who are ready to secure work upon release and accomplish this task quickly are less likely to recidivate.

Do we have a coordinated process for making service referrals and tracking data? To increase the likelihood of success in your efforts, you must determine which agency in your partnership is responsible for making referrals to community-based agencies that provide reentry services. Participants should be tracked through the referral process so that the effectiveness of the services provided by the community-based agency can be evaluated.

Evidence-Based Practices

In recent years, the use of evidence-based practices (EBPs) has been gained widespread acceptance in the criminal justice and employment and training communities. The briefing paper, An Introduction to Evidence-Based Practices, provides a concise history of the evidence-based movement in the criminal justice field, explains what is meant by evidence and where evidence comes from, and discusses issues associated with implementing EBPs. The National Institute of Justice's CrimeSolutions.gov provides information on a wide variety of criminal justice programs which are rated as "effective," "promising," or "no evidence." Additional information about EBPs can be found at The What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse, a "one-stop shop" for research on the effectiveness of a wide variety of reentry programs and practices. It includes focus areas such as cognitive behavioral treatment, education, employment and substance abuse and youth reentry and aftercare programs.

In the field of employment and training, the briefing paper, What Works In Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence, summarizes the evidence on adult and youth job training strategies. Workforce System Strategies, a website administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, is a resource library that profiles evidence-based practices that can be used to improve program outcomes for job seekers and employers.

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Toolkit for Improving Program Outcomes in Correctional Settings

If your program provides services in a correctional facility, you need to be flexible and willing to adapt to a demanding environment. You must also take the time needed to build strong relationships with the correctional staff and the prisoner population. Every correctional facility has a different culture. Some embrace change and welcome new approaches, while others may be reluctant to adopt the latest evidenced-based practices. If the latter is the case, your role as an advocate for employment and training services is to spark enthusiasm for your program's efforts and offer opportunities for incremental change that allows facility staff to see the full potential of your initiative. The ***Toolkit for Improving Program Outcomes in Correctional Settings*** included in the appendix provides a framework for planning, initiating and maintaining an employment and training program in a correctional setting. It offers strategies for overcoming the multiple challenges that exist and practical tips for building and maintaining relationships in that environment.

Implementation Planning

Implementation Planning involves more than simply determining how to deliver services. It requires that careful thought be given to setting interim goals, developing quality assurance mechanisms, resource development, and other critical factors. This section will provide you with a basic framework for implementing your project. Grantees are advised to consult with their Federal Project Officer during the development of their plan for the specific requirements of their Regional U.S. Department of Labor office.

Step 1 – Establish an Implementation Team – The lead agency should designate an implementation team that involves both internal and external stakeholders, either as active members or in an advisory capacity. The purpose of the team is to ensure compliance with grant requirements and develop an implementation plan that adheres to the original proposal. Make sure that the team includes all major government and community partners as specified in your proposal. The team should also include project staff from different disciplines (caseworkers, management information specialists, fiscal staff, etc.). A meeting schedule should be established and minutes should be recorded each time the group assembles. It's critical that each team member clearly understands his or her role and responsibility in the implementation process.

Step 2 – Finalize Project Goals and Priorities - Based on the signed grant agreement, you want to articulate a vision and goals for the project and share this with the implementation team. The objectives for the project should be **S**pecific, **M**easureable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime bound. The team needs to identify any constraints to the project and address them accordingly. If any additional resources are needed to achieve the project's objectives, you'll want to identify them at this time. Finally, you want to set boundaries for the project so that you can avoid "mission creep" and stay on target for reaching your goals.

Step 3 - Establish Implementation Strategies and Scope – During this step in the process, decide whether the project will be "phased in" or whether you will adopt the "big bang" approach and be fully operational on the first day of operation. Review the resources needed for project implementation and determine if any key resources are missing. You should plan for addressing any key resource constraints that are identified. Finally, develop a communication strategy for announcing the start of the program and choose a start-date.

Step 4 - Develop the Implementation Plan with a Realistic Timeline – For this step in the process, you want to develop a timeline for all critical tasks and designate who is responsible for each deliverable. The start-up tasks may include:

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- Selecting a facility and/or making renovations
- Selecting and purchasing equipment
- Acquiring student materials
- Developing job descriptions
- Recruiting and hiring staff[1]
- Developing policies and procedures which include, but are not limited to:
  - Recruitment and enrollment
  - Case management and supportive services
  - Training services
  - Job placement services
  - Career development and planning and educational/vocational training services
  - Post-placement follow-up services
- Designing the program configuration
- Reviewing the budget
- Designing reports
- Developing and delivering training needed to ensure that the staff is prepared to meet the project's deliverables
- Developing formal agreements with vendors needed to achieve project objectives
- Planning a start date (including staff schedules, dress rehearsal, and go/no go decision)
- Designing a delivery plan for the all project components, specifying who will provide what specific services, when will these services be delivered, where will these services take place and how will these services be delivered
- Identifying all possible risks associated with the project, quantifying those risks, and a developing a response for each identified risk

Step 5 - Develop Communications Strategy – This step involves developing internal and external communication strategies for the project including:

- Scheduling meetings
- Developing press releases, creating the project's website and social media presence, preparing newsletters, scheduling community meetings and recognition ceremonies, etc.
- Scheduling contact with the Federal Project Officer.

Step 6 - Establish Benchmarks to Measure Project Success – In this phase of the implementation process, you will develop specific benchmarks that are based on the project's

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[1] The Hiring Checklist provides a comprehensive guide to screening, interviewing and selecting job candidates.

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objectives and aligned with the Department of Labor's goal's memorandum. This will include developing a mechanism for recording the project's progress against benchmarks. The reporting mechanism should chart -- at least on a monthly basis -- the key program operational and outcomes and a designated staff person should be assigned this task.

Recruiting and Assessing Program Participants

Recruitment Planning - Employment and training program managers often assume that a high demand for their services will allow them to meet their enrollment goals without any difficulty. Unfortunately, many managers discover that this is not always the case, and as a consequence, their programs fail to meet their critical enrollment goals. The process of recruiting participants should begin soon after a grant has been awarded. The first step is to review the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA), your proposal, and your signed statement of work to determine and confirm participant eligibility requirements and enrollment goals. This review should be conducted with any project partners who agreed to be participant referral sources allowing you to reconfirm their responsibilities, expectations, and goals. This reconfirmation should include a recruitment plan with monthly goals that is incorporated into a memorandum of understanding with project partners.[2]

Crafting an Effective Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

As you develop a memorandum of understanding, use this checklist to ensure its effectiveness.

- ✓ Does the MOU highlight the goals and mission of both parties?
- ✓ Does the MOU outline the intended objectives and outcomes of the partnership?
- ✓ Does the MOU identify specifics of the target audience served by the project?
- ✓ Does the MOU describe the roles and responsibilities of each partner organization/institution?
- ✓ Does the MOU designate primary points of contact for each of the involved parties?
- ✓ Does the MOU specify the intended financial obligation, if any, of each party?
- ✓ Does the MOU state the duration and timeline for implementing the proposed activities?
- ✓ Does the MOU outline an annual review or evaluative process for the partnership?

Your recruitment plan should have a mechanism for tracking referrals and the outcomes and reporting those outcomes to your partners in an easy-to-read format. Each month, you'll want to review your recruitment plan against goals and provide your partners with feedback on their

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[2] To learn how to create a memorandum of understanding that works, watch the webinar recording, Crafting an Effective Memorandum of Understanding.

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referrals. Be sure to commend your partners as your project achieves it recruitment goals. Positive reinforcement goes a long way to building strong partnerships.

Your planning should also consider other factors that will affect the recruitment process. Have you prepared a sufficient number of enrollment applications to accommodate demand? Have you engaged sufficient staff and volunteers to handle the response to your recruitment efforts? Does your plan ensure that the time between a prospective client's completion of an application and the start of program activities is kept to a minimum? All of these factors can impact the success of your recruitment efforts.

Outreach Strategies – Whether your project is based in a correctional facility, the community or both, there is great value to using a variety of outreach strategies. The strategies you use will depend upon the nature of your project. Prison-based projects rely on posters and flyers, brochures and word-of-mouth. You should also consider presentations at inmate orientation sessions and inmate council meetings, brief announcements at officer roll-calls or in-service training sessions, and the distribution of informational flyers to visitors who can encourage their relatives or friends to participate in your program. For programs based in the community, consider the following measures:

- Go to the community where your program participants reside and make presentations at local churches, community-based organizations, and community events.
- Place a prominent recruitment announcement on your organization's home page that links to a web page which provides enrollment requirements, a program description and a description of benefits. Make sure that your website is smart phone "friendly" and can easily be used by those who will access it that way.
- Offer a virtual tour of your program on your website using photos or video.
- Offer prospective participants a way to begin the enrollment process online or download an application from your website.
- Use your written or online application to track how participants learned about your project. This will help you refine your recruitment efforts going forward.
- Use social media such as Facebook to broadcast your recruitment efforts.
- Use print media such as posters, flyers and brochures to announce your recruitment efforts and make sure that they are prominently displayed in your offices, partnering agencies, and America's Job Centers. Be sure to place a QR[3] code linking to your website on all printed media.
- Place an announcement in a local newspaper.

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[3] To learn how to add QR Codes to your printed media see **Using QR Codes** in the Appendix.

- Submit your recruitment announcement to the local public access television station for posting on its community bulletin board.
- Place articles about your project in the newsletters of your project partners.
- Develop a radio public service announcement for participant recruitment.
- Create a PowerPoint that you can use for recruitment presentations. Broadcast it on the Internet using [SlideShare](#).
- Write a press release announcing the program's start-up and distribute it to the local media.
- Use inexpensive giveaways to announce the project's startup if permitted by your funding source.
- Hold an open house to kick-off the start of the project.
- Engage successful program graduates as champions in your recruitment efforts.
- Identify opportunities for piggy-backing on the marketing and stakeholder outreach capabilities of your project partners.

Whatever measures you use, makes sure that each contains relevant contact information including your website address, an e-mail address, the name of an individual to contact, the program's address, and your program's phone number.

Creating a Project Brand

To stand out in a competitive marketplace, your program's communications with stakeholders must be compelling and powerfully express who you are and what you do. Every program needs a brand that appeals to program participants. It should include the name of the project, its logo and a short and memorable tagline. Your tagline should clearly convey a benefit to participants, e.g., a better job, career advancement, or better wages.

The Intake Process – All of the measures described above will bring prospective program participants to your door. But unless they successfully enroll them in your project, your recruitment efforts will not succeed. Review your intake process to ensure that it is streamlined, user friendly, engaging, and non-bureaucratic. Check your reception area each day and do whatever it takes to make it a welcoming environment. A "painful" intake process conducted in a shabby environment can deter even the most motivated client from completing the intake process.

Make sure that you have sufficient staff and volunteers on board who are prepared to answer all inquiries as quickly as possible. At the beginning of the recruitment process, provide flexible

hours and locations for intake as this will maximize your pool of eligible candidates. Plan on following up on persons who show a partial interest, but did not complete intake. They may be ambivalent and need a little encouragement to apply.

The Assessment Process – Program participants are more likely to secure and retain employment if they receive a thorough assessment upon intake and any identified barriers to employment retention are properly addressed. Additionally, you'll want to provide career interest and career value assessments if the program participant has not identified a suitable career pathway. Don't try to squeeze in all of your assessments during a participant's first days in the program. That can be exhausting and may cause some to drop out of your program. Rather, start by using interactive group assessment activities that build bonds between program participants and staff.

Never underestimate the importance of connecting individuals to training opportunities that are matched to their interests and skills. Many justice-individuals have limited work experience and limited knowledge of the job market. For these individuals, you want to determine:

- Where do they stand in terms of career development?
- What interests, values or abilities do they have?
- What training and occupations are best matched to their interests?
- What are their strengths and needs and what remedial strategies are required?

Ultimately, your job is to help your participants become excited about the possibilities and develop plans for achieving their career goals. Assessment is the foundation for all the work you do with participants. It helps shape the individual service strategy for each participant and determines the case management services that are provided to them. Assessments can be used to explore career possibilities by learning about a client's interests, values, and skills. They can also help clients make good career decisions by understanding their decision making style and identifying any potential barriers. Assessment will also help you help identify a participant's training needs and they can help a participant who is working make their current jobs more satisfying and productive.

To be effective, assessments need to be:

- comprehensive
- exploratory
- ongoing
- properly administered
- embedded within program activities

Informal assessments - Informal assessments are instruments that have been developed without scientific rigor and have no established validity or reliability.   Results for one person cannot be compared with those of others and there's no standard linkage between results and occupational choices. They are subjective and can be open to different interpretations. They are also likely to take more time to administer and maybe take more time to customize to a specific situation than formal assessments.

Informal assessments do, however, have many advantages. They tend to be less intimidating and more enjoyable than more formal assessments. Many are available at no or low cost. They can also provide an opportunity to learn more about the persons involved than a more formal instrument does.   The best way to start the assessment process is to use informal assessments that are embedded into your program activities and then move on to more formal assessments as needed or required.

There are many different types of informal assessments. In forced-choice activities, individuals are asked to choose from two or more alternatives in response to a specific question. After each individual or members of a group have completed their selections, there is usually a discussion about how and why people made their choices. The appendix includes an example of a force-choice activity (Career Interest and Values Exploration Activity) that you can use.

Card sorts can be used as a quick, initial assessment of interests, skills, or values. An individual would be given a set of cards, each with the title of a different work task written on it, and be asked to arrange them in stacks, such as "I'm interested" "I might be interested" and "I'm not interested at all."

Checklists are made up of lists of skills, work tasks, work values, or characteristics that individuals may use or want in their work. The individual is instructed to mark those of highest importance in one way and those of secondary importance in another.

Structured interviews use specific questions have been formulated in advance in order to gather needed information. The Appendix includes sample questions (**Sample Questions for Structured Interviews**) that can be used for these types of interviews.

Formal Assessments[4] **–** Formal assessments are inventories or tests that have been developed by experts using the scientific principles of test construction. The main difference between formal assessments and informal assessments is that formal assessments are standardized.

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[4] A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments is a comprehensive guide to the standardized instruments used by career development professionals.

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There are specific steps that must be followed in administering and interpreting the assessment. Also, they typically produce scores or score profiles as part of their results.

Preparations for Assessments - Whether you are using a formal or informal assessment, it's important to prepare the participant.   If you don't, they may not give it their full attention or may become anxious about it and either might influence the outcome of the process. You want to:

- Give them the name and type of instrument(s) to be administered
- Tell them the types of questions the instrument(s) will include
- Tell them what information the instrument(s) will, and will not, produce
- Tell them how long the assessment will take
- Tell them when and where the assessment will take place
- Tell them how long it will be before the results are available

Because the word "test" is likely to make a program participant anxious, you always want to be sure to use the word "assessment."

Using Holland Codes for Career Exploration - Because John Holland's theory of career development provides the basis both for assessment of a person's characteristics related to job choice and possible interventions to meet these needs, it is important for career advisors to have an understanding of his work. There are four assumptions of John Holland's theory:

First, individuals have unique characteristics related to interests, abilities, needs, values, and personality traits.

Second, occupations and jobs have unique characteristics related to work tasks, skills required, demands, and rewards.

Third, the unique characteristics of both individuals and occupations or jobs, can be measured.

Fourth, workers and employers are most satisfied when there is a good match between the characteristics of the worker and the characteristics of the occupation or job.

These assumptions not only support John Holland's theory, but are also the basis for any assessment approach that looks closely at the characteristics of an individual and then attempts to compare them or match them with jobs or other kinds of activities.

This type of theory is particularly helpful when it is necessary to assist individuals in identifying kinds of jobs or training that they will probably like.

There are four basic concepts of Holland's theory. Holland's first concept is that people can be described as a combination of two or more of six personality types:

- R – Realistic
- I – Investigative
- A – Artistic
- S – Social
- E – Enterprising
- C – Conventional

Holland's second concept is that occupations, jobs, and training can also be characterized or coded by the same six types. The O*Net website provide lists of occupations by Holland codes.

Holland's third concept is that people of a given type seek environments of the same or similar type.

Finally, Holland's fourth concept is that if a person can find such a compatible environment, he or she is likely to be satisfied and productive.

Here is a closer look at the six personality types identified by Holland:

The realistic personality type describes people who:

- Are athletic or have mechanical ability
- Prefer to work with objects, machines, tools, plants, or animals
- Prefer to work outdoors
- Tend to be down to earth and practical

Career possibilities for the realistic personality type include

- Construction Worker
- Engineer
- Automotive service technician
- Carpenter
- Baker
- Bookbinder
- Bricklayer
- Bus Driver
- Diesel Mechanic

- Electrician

The investigative personality type describes people who:

- Observe, learn, investigate, analyze, evaluate, or solve problems
- Work in environments that are associated with biological and physical sciences or in scientific and medical fields
- Tend to be curious, studious, and independent

Career possibilities for the investigative personality type include:

- Biologist
- Computer programmer
- Geologist
- Hazardous Waste Technician
- Market Research Analyst
- Medical Lab Technologist

The artistic personality type describes individuals who:

- Have innovating or intuitional abilities
- Like to work in unstructured situations using their imagination and creativity
- Work in environments that are associated with language, art, music, and drama
- Tend to be creative and free-thinking

Career possibilities for the artistic personality type include:

- Artist
- Illustrator
- Photographer
- Composer
- Singer
- Actor
- Designer

The social personality type describes people who:

- Enjoy activities involving informing, teaching, and helping others
- Consider teaching, nursing, and counseling as suitable work environments
- Tend to be helpful and friendly

Career possibilities for the social personality include:

- Teacher
- Nurse
- Counselor
- Social worker
- Customer service worker
- Waiter

The enterprising personality type describes people who:

- Like leading or influencing people
- Have occupations involving sales, management, and persuasion
- Tend to be ambitious, outgoing, energetic, and self-confident

Career possibilities for the enterprising personality include:

- Salesperson
- Lawyer
- Politician
- Business owner
- Executive or manager
- Music or sports promoter

The conventional personality type describes individuals who:

- Have clerical or numerical ability, carry out tasks, or follow through on other's instructions
- Prefer record keeping, computation, typing, or computer occupation
- Tend to be responsible, dependable, and detail oriented

Career possibilities for the conventional personality include:

- Secretary
- Receptionist
- Office worker
- Librarian
- Bank clerk
- Computer operator

- Store clerk

An individual's personality is a composite of all of the types and each individual has a unique combination. Persons are typically attracted to two or three areas of interest. These two or three letters are a person's "Holland Code." For example, a code of "RES" means the person has a personality and interests that are associated with the Realistic type and to a lesser extent, has a personality and interests that are associated with the Enterprising and Social types.

There are various ways that an individual can learn what his or her Holland code is. First, a practitioner who knows Holland's theory well may help individuals identify their code through an informal assessment.

In addition to an informal assessment, a practitioner may administer one of several interest inventories.
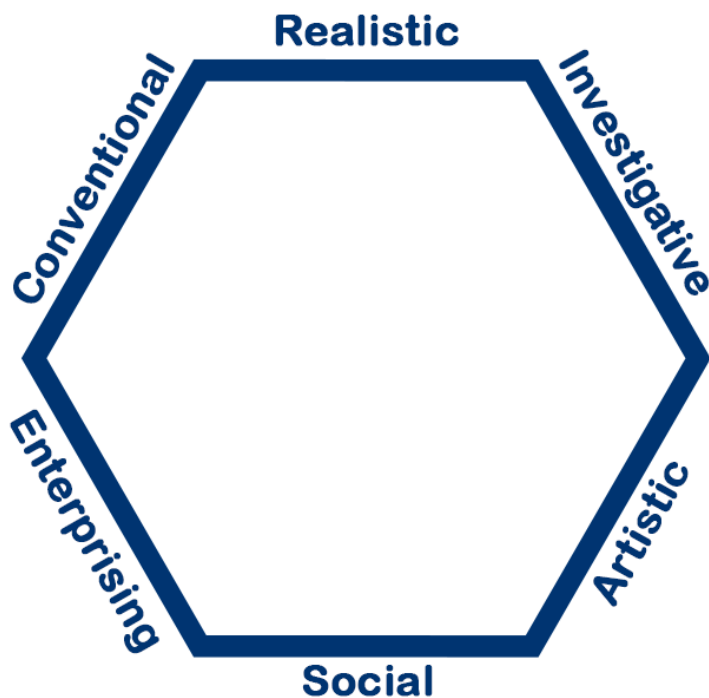
Holland's extensive research, replicated by many since his original work, indicates that there is a specific ordering or arrangement of the six types. This arrangement, depicted by Holland as a hexagon, applies to both personality characteristics of a person and to characteristics of occupations. The letter R can be placed at any point on the hexagon, but once it is placed, the order, in clockwise fashion, must be R, I, A, S, E, C. For this reason, the theory is sometimes called the RIASEC theory.

Those types that are next door to each other on the hexagon (such as RI, IR, IA, AI, SE, ES, etc.) are highly consistent while those that are across from each other (that is, CA and AC, EI and IE, and SR and RS) are inconsistent. Of course, there is also an intermediate level of consistency, namely IS, AE, SC, ER, and RA and their opposites.

There are fewer jobs available that combine opposites (such as CA, IE, RS, and the reverse of these letters). Also, people with the opposite codes might feel torn between doing one kind of work or the other. If jobs that combine these opposites cannot be found, it may be better to assist the individual to choose one of the two areas for work and to attempt to use the other in community, home, or leisure activities.

My Next Move is designed to be used by program participants and provides them with the opportunity to search careers using key words, browse careers by industry, and match their interests to careers and training. The o*net Interest Profiler can be accessed from the My Next Move website and used by program participants to identify their Holland Codes and explore their career interests.

Case management folders[5] – The information gathered from program participants should be maintained in folders that are secure, organized in a consistent manner, and reviewed periodically for quality assurance. Staff should be periodically reminded that *if it isn't documented, it did not happen*. Use the following checklist to ensure that your case management folders meet the highest professional standards.

- ✓ Has a sample case file been prepared for staff guidance and training purposes?
- ✓ Are files maintained in a secure location that can be locked at the end of each day?
- ✓ Are all files maintained in the same type of folder or binder?
- ✓ Is a consistent way of typing each participant's name on the folder cover (font size, first name, last name or last name, first name) being used?
- ✓ Do folders contain specific sections for intake, education, employment, correspondence, etc. that are clearly labeled in the same way?
- ✓ Is the information obtained from the participant and other sources placed in the appropriate section and in the appropriate order?
- ✓ Does each folder contain sufficient documentation to support program eligibility?
- ✓ Are all case notes typed or clearly legible if handwritten?
- ✓ Are all case notes written in a way that clearly tells the participant's life story, needs, and career objectives to a reader unfamiliar with the program participant?
- ✓ Are all case notes complete, e.g., who, what, when, where and how?

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[5] For an overview of case management services, see the slideshow Case Management for Effective Service Delivery.

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- ✓ Are multiple sources of contacts for the participant recorded in the folder including, but not limited to telephone numbers and addresses of relatives and friends and social media pages such as Facebook?[6]
- ✓ Are all documents properly attached to the case folder and dated?
- ✓ Are copies of all required documentation clear and legible?
- ✓ Are all assessments, both informal and formal, clearly documented and accompanied by an individual service plan with short and long-term goals, strategies for overcoming barriers, the person responsible for completing each task and the completion date for each task?
- ✓ Do the case notes document ongoing contact between the case manager and the program participant and any changes to the individual career plan that is required by changing circumstances?
- ✓ Is the same format used for all case notes (date, reason for session, plan, title and signature of writer, etc.)?
- ✓ Are all documents that require a signature signed by the appropriate person or persons?
- ✓ Are all blank spaces in forms that do not require an answer marked as "not applicable or N/A?"
- ✓ Have notes been reviewed by a supervisor to ensure that they meet professional standards (good spelling, punctuation, and grammar, avoidance of the use of slang and unknown abbreviations, etc.)?
- ✓ Are all post-it notes contained in the folder rather than affixed to the exterior where they can be dislodged and lost?
- ✓ Is care taken to keep food and drinks away from documents and case folders?
- ✓ Are damaged or worn folder labels and cover replaced as needed?

Individual Employment Plan and Individual Service Strategy

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that all Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth participants be provided an assessment and an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), depending on the program. While the IEP and ISS are similar documents and contain similar processes, the IEP is for Adult and dislocated Worker Program participants and the ISS is designed for Youth Program participants. The IEP and ISS are a culmination of the assessment and need to identify the employment goal, appropriate

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[6] While having multiple sources of contact are essential for providing follow-up services during a participant's engagement in the job search process and following their placement into employment, please keep in mind that the quality of the relationship between the participant and the program is the most important factor in maintaining communication over time.

achievement objectives, and the appropriate mix of services. The content of the IEP/ISS is the road map and compass demonstrating the agreed upon plan of action. The IEP and ISS are also used to justify training which must be linked to occupations in demand in the local area or areas where the individual resides.

Individual Service Strategy - The ISS represents an individual plan for each young person that includes:
1. Educational goal(s) of the participant;
2. Employment goal(s) of the participant, including, when appropriate, non-traditional employment goals;
3. Objective assessment of current academic and skills levels, basic and occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests and aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs;
4. A "Roadmap" to achieve measurable and attainable short-term and long-term goals.
5. Appropriate achievement objectives for the participant;
6. Appropriate services, the sequence and mix of the services, and justification for the services to be provided;
7. Any referral(s) to other services / programs;
8. Assessment of the individual's financial, social and / or supportive service's needs.

The ISS will serve as the basis for the entire case management service strategy and as a guide for delivery of appropriate services. It documents a youth's progress, activities completed, benchmarks reached, and any other accomplishments. Developed in partnership with the program participant, it is used as a tool that can and will change over time, as necessary, to meet the needs of the young person. The ISS serves as a roadmap to achieve measurable and attainable short-term and long-term goals; and should reflect the young person's interests and incorporate the appropriate career pathway planning.

To learn more about developing an ISS and review a sample form, see [Developing an Individual Service Strategy](#).

Individual Employment Plan – The IEP is an individual plan based on the information provided by the assessment and is developed jointly by the participant and his or her counselor. It is an ongoing strategy that serves as the basis for the entire case management strategy, and identifies:
1. Employment goal(s), including non-traditional employment goals;
2. Job readiness, specific strengths, and identified deficiencies;

3. Appropriate achievement objectives;
4. Appropriate services based on assessment;
5. Assessment of individual's financial, social and / or supportive needs; and,
6. Sequence and mix of services to be provided.

The IEP also documents the services provided to the individual. If changes in the employment goals and/or services occur, the IEP must be revised. Local labor market information must be taken into consideration in the development of the IEP.

To learn more about helping program participants develop an IEP, see How to Write an Effective Individual Employment Plan and download this sample plan.

Preparing Program Participants for Employment

Your pre-employment instruction should follow the plan outlined in your proposal and signed statement of work. If you are contracting out this service, review the plan with your partner and set monthly goals. Don't assume that the content is being delivered as planned. Periodically visit the classroom to ensure that the curriculum is being followed and that students are being tested for the competencies learned as they progress through the course of instruction.

Motivating for Change - It's not uncommon for persons leaving prison to think that they will be unable to secure sustainable work because of the criminal record. Telling them that many

Motivational Ruler

As you assess the job readiness of a program participant, consider using a motivational ruler to determine their level of motivation and the barriers that they perceive may stand in their way. Here's how: show them a printed scale with one representing "very unlikely" and ten representing "very likely." Ask them, "On a scale of one to ten, how likely do you think you will be successful in your search for employment?" If, for example, they point to "six," ask them, "what would it take for you to get to seven or eight?" Use their response to this question to help them create their career action plan. The motivational ruler can also be used to assess the likelihood of success for each step in their action plan.

justice-involved individuals do succeed in securing work is not the best strategy for changing that thinking. It's more effective to use motivational interview strategies to change this type of thinking rather than use statistics.[7] Another effective strategy is to ask successful program graduates to provide testimonials, either in person or via a video recording. Hearing from someone who has been through the system and succeeded in securing work is inspirational and validates the effectiveness of your efforts. Some organizations post photos of graduations or graduates at work in their reception and classroom areas. This can also serve to demonstrate the value of your program's training and placement efforts.

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[7] For additional information on motivational interviewing see *Motivating Offenders to Change: A Guide for Probation and Parole*.

Start the Process Early - Don't wait to begin your pre-employment instruction efforts until the conclusion of your vocational training. It takes time to master skills such as a networking, interviewing and a delivering a 30-second elevator speech. Waiting until the end of vocational training may not give participants enough time to master the skills needed to make a good first impression. Some programs have found it effective to teach participants how to make an effective elevator speech and asking them to deliver their speeches at random times or when visitors are on the premises. Practice does make perfect[8].

Practice without feedback can, however, can be counterproductive. When teaching interviewing skills, be sure to incorporate feedback from other participants. This can be done by distributing feedback sheets or asking for comments. One effective strategy is to ask three questions: What did this interviewee do well? What is one thing they can do to improve? What's one "wow" for their presentation?

Simulated Online/Kiosk Job Application

Available for download at no cost from the National Institute of Corrections, the Simulated Online/Kiosk Job Application software provides basic information about computerized employment applications, tips for completing online job applications, a printable worksheet that can be used to prepare program participants for using these systems, and a full-length interactive application with context sensitive help. At the completion of the process, the user can print out the information that was entered.

While there is no single correct way to handle the felony question during an employment interview, it's generally best to keep it simple and not overwhelm your program participant with a plethora or rules or strategies. They should be advised to be honest, but not view the interview room as a "confessional." As an intermediary, you will undoubtedly ensure that the job they are applying for is not prohibited by the nature of their conviction or the terms of their probation or parole supervision. They should be taught to acknowledge their criminal record and quickly describe what they have done to change the direction of their lives. That should be followed by a sincere declaration to be an exemplary employee. For example:

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[8] For guidance on what should be included in an elevator speech along with career branding tips see the Personal Career Branding Toolkit.

"You have a right to know that I made some bad decisions in my life and was convicted of burglary two years ago. Since that time, I have gotten my GED, attended a vocational training school, and become certified as a pest control worker. I have no desire to make the same decisions that I have made in the past. I can promise you that if you hire me, I'll be the best employee you ever had."

Some organizations have found it useful to provide participants with a pocket resume that they can keep in their wallet and review prior to a job interview. It should be printed on card stock and include reminders on questions to expect along with tips for making a good impression.

Don't assume that your participants will have interview appropriate clothing needed to make a good first impression. Ask them to wear their interview clothing during your scheduled mock interview practice. If what they are wearing is not appropriate or in poor shape, use local clothing banks or other resources to help them make a good first impression.

Familiarize Participants with their Legal Rights - In addition to having proper clothing, an awareness of their rights under the law can bolster the confidence of a job applicant. Participants should be familiar with local and state laws regarding what employer can and cannot ask them on a job application or an employment interview. A good resource for obtaining this information is the National Law Employment Project which tracks the implementation of "ban the box" measures in states, cities, and counties. (http://www.nelp.org/publication/ban-the-box-fair-chance-hiring-state-and-local-guide/) Another source of information regarding "ban the box" is the National HIRE Network (http://hirenetwork.org/clearinghouse).

Program participants and staff should also be aware of the U.S Equal Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) enforcement guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 along with other existing federal policies

Job Seeker Preparation

There are many diverse competencies needed to secure a job interview and compete successfully for employment. Use this checklist to ensure that your pre-employment instruction covers all the bases.

- ✓ Effective and ineffective job search strategies
- ✓ How to use the Internet to search for employment opportunities
- ✓ How to use personal, professional, and opportunistic networks
- ✓ How to use social media such as LinkedIn for job search purposes
- ✓ Resume preparation and review
- ✓ Tips for completing a job application
- ✓ Tips for completing a kiosk or online job application
- ✓ Interviewing skills, including videotaping of simulated job interviews
- ✓ Tips for job interviews

that affect persons with criminal convictions in areas such as public housing, parental rights, and Medicaid suspensions and terminations. A complete set of **Reentry Mythbusters,** fact sheets which were designed to clarify those policies, can be found at https://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/mythbusters/.

Participants should be encouraged to check their criminal records for errors before they apply for employment. Many criminal record depositories have out-of-date information or contain information about arrests that did not lead to a conviction. If there is any erroneous information in their criminal justice records, a program participant can submit a written request to amend the information. Guidance on obtaining an FBI rap sheet can be found on the HIRE Network's web site (http://hirenetwork.org/content/fbi-rap-sheets-frequently-asked-questions) along with information about each state's criminal record depositary (http://hirenetwork.org/clearinghouse).

Depending on state law and the type of offense, it may be possible to have some or all of a criminal record expunged. This typically applies to misdemeanors or minor offenses and does not apply to convictions in Federal court. Three jurisdictions -- Chicago, Maryland, and Louisiana -- have apps that can be used to by a participant to determine if they are eligible for expungement and how to get in touch with an attorney. For most program participants,

Teaching Networking Skills

Here's an effective and fun way to teach networking skills to a group of roughly 30 participants: Prepare 30 cards, each with an occupation and be sure to include several that are unusual, such as "ballerina" or "acupuncturist." Randomly give a card to each participant and ask them to walk around the room and obtain the names of at least two *real* people who they can network with to learn more about the occupation. As you give instructions for the activity, tell the group that this is not a "race" and that they should write down the names of the persons identified. When you debrief the activity, ask "What did you learn from this activity?" and "What were the challenges doing it?"

legal guidance would be needed to navigate the process. It is a good practice to partner with nonprofit legal service providers in your community who can provide this type of assistance.

Teach Participants Networking Skills - Although the relationships you build with employers are critical to the success of your job placements efforts, many program participants can and do obtain employment through their own efforts. Don't discount the strength of their social networks. Instead, you'll want to build on these assets and help connect them to their existing

networks. This can be done with classroom activities and homework assignments that encourage participants to identify members of their family, local community, professional, and opportunistic networks.

Provide Participants with a LinkedIn Profile – LinkedIn is the most popular social media website for professional networking and it's been reported that more than 90% of human resource managers are using it to recruit candidates. Providing program participants with a LinkedIn profile serves two important purposes. First, because a LinkedIn profile typically comes up on the first page of a Google search, it can serve to mitigate any negative information that employers might see when reviewing the search results on an applicant's name. Second, having a LinkedIn profile provides a resource that can be used by a program participant for future career advancement. The bulletin Use LinkedIn for Professional Networking provides guidance on helping program participants create an effective LinkedIn profile along with a checklist you can use to fine-tune and promote their profile.

Measuring Job Readiness - It has often been said that what gets measured get done. To that end, it's helpful to assess job readiness at enrollment to determine what services a program participant may require and at a later point during his or her involvement with the program to determine the progress they have made. There are many job readiness assessments that can be purchased, but none has been normed for persons involved in the criminal justice system. If you are considering using one, review the literature provided by the developer to determine if it meets your needs and the needs of the persons you serve. Factors to consider include user friendliness, expertise of content developer, and any research that has been conducted to ensure that the instrument is valid and reliable.

If you wish to develop your own job readiness assessment, a template has been provided in the appendix. You might also want to review a comprehensive work readiness questionnaire that was developed by the North Department of Human Services.

Promote a Change Thinking Patterns[9] – Developed by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), the Thinking for a Change 4.0 curriculum incorporates research from cognitive restructuring theory, social skills development, and the learning and use of problem solving skills. The curriculum is comprised of 25 lessons that build upon each other, and contains appendices that can be used to craft an aftercare program to meet ongoing cognitive behavioral needs of your group. Not all lessons can be completed in one session, so a typical delivery cycle may take 30 sessions. Sessions should last between one and two hours. Ideally,

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[9] Thinking for a Change and Cognitive-Behavioral Programs Annotated Bibliography provides a list of research articles that support Thinking for a Change and other cognitive-behavioral training programs for justice-involved individuals.

the curriculum is delivered two times per week, with a minimum recommended dosage of once per week and a maximum of three times per week.

The program is designed to be provided to justice-involved adults and youth, males and females. It is intended for groups of eight to twelve and should be delivered only by trained facilitators. Due to its integrated structure, Thinking for a Change is a closed group, meaning members need to start at the beginning of a cycle, and may not join the group mid-stream (lesson five is a logical cut-off point for new group members).

The National Institute of Corrections only provides the facilitator training to governmental correctional agencies and is not able to include non-profit or private agencies or citizens in its training programs. However, if you work for a private provider of services to a government corrections organization (a jail, a prison or a community corrections organization (probation or parole agency), you may be eligible. Your agency can request Thinking for a Change Facilitator Training from NIC directly, with a letter included from the agency CEO of the government corrections agency that your agency is statutorily required to provide services to and/or contractually provides services to justice-involved individuals. This letter must accompany the request to NIC.

Provide a Resource Handbook – Many jurisdictions have developed resource handbooks that can be used by justice-involved individuals to prepare for employment. If you are seeking materials and worksheets that can be used to prepare justice-involved individuals for re-entry and employment, please be sure to download the [Adult Pre-Release Handbook (2018)](#) which was prepared by the Minnesota Department of Corrections. This comprehensive, 256-page handbook covers a wide range of subjects and all of the content is in the public domain.

Increasing the Effectiveness of your Program's Job Development Efforts

When working with individuals who face multiple barriers to employment, the success of your job development efforts depends on many factors, all which serve to build strong working relationships with employers. This section will provide an overview of these critical factors and provide resources you can use to ensure that your efforts achieve the objectives of your project.

Training Staff

Staff training, whether it is intended to brush up existing skills or teach new ones, increases the efficiency of an organization and contributes to employee satisfaction. Several excellent curricula and guides for job developers are available at no cost for download. These include *Working with Employers: Skills and Strategies for Job Development Success* (Facilitator's Guide and Participant's Manual). Another valuable resource, *Job Development Essentials: A Guide for Job Developers*, provides practical, detailed advice for workforce development professionals with an emphasis on engaging employers, providing expanded services to the business community and involving business people as resources and advocates for an organization. While not written expressly for job developers, *Employment Retention Essentials* offers many practical strategies for keeping program graduates employed and interacting effectively with employers before and after placements are made.

Conduct a Self-Evaluation of Your Job Development Efforts - The first step to increasing the effectiveness of your job development efforts involves conducting an assessment of existing practices that identifies areas that need improvement. These areas include:

- Employer Outreach Strategies
- Promotional Materials and Marketing
- Identifying Employer Needs
- Managing the Job Application and Interview Process
- Establishing and Maintaining Partnerships with Employers

Helping Justice-Involved Individuals Secure Work that Pays a Living Wage

- Performance Tracking

The [Employment Engagement Assessment Instrument](#) and the [Job Development and Placement Services Assessment Instrument](#) can be used to evaluate your existing practices and develop a plan for improving placement and retention outcomes. While it is not necessary to implement every strategy described in these instruments, an assessment of existing practices is the first step in identifying any shortcomings that may exist or ways that your existing methods can be improved.

Develop an Employer Outreach Plan – Your employer outreach methods should be driven be a written plan that establishes your core message, identifies multiple strategies, and sets quantifiable goals for your project.

Coordinate your Outreach Strategies – You do not want several job developers[10] contacting the same employer and should have a system to ensure that this does not occur. Depending on the nature and the size of your project, you may want to assign job developers to a particular sector or geographical area.

> **Outreach Materials Checklist**
>
> To compete successfully in the human resource marketplace, your outreach materials must be clear, concise, and professional in appearance. Review your brochures, flyers, and other promotional material against this checklist to ensure their effectiveness.
>
> ✓ Are they targeted to specific industries rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach?
> ✓ Do they reflect a business-focused and business driven approach?
> ✓ Do they monetize the benefits of partnering with your project?
> ✓ Do they mention benefits such as no-cost applicant screening, decreased time-to-hire, reduced recruitment costs and service following placement?
> ✓ Do they include a testimonial from an employer?

Seek to Build Long-term Relationships – Before engaging an employer, take the time learn about their business by visiting their website and familiarizing yourself with the scope and

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[10] Please note that we have used the term "job developer" as the organizational title for the person who has primary responsibility for identifying job opportunities and matching the appropriate participant to the opportunities that are available. While it is a commonly used title, please do not infer that it is the best term to use for this position. Account services manager or business services representative are two frequently used titles for this position and may be more useful when approaching business owners. It should also be noted that job placement assistance by staff does not preclude the need to provide participants with the competencies needed to secure work on their own. The best results are achieved when staff and participants combine their efforts.

culture of their organization. It is also important to learn about the job requirements for the occupations associated with their line of work. You can do the latter by using the [Occupational Handbook](#) which is the government's premier source of career information. The Occupational Outlook Handbook will also inform you about a particular occupation's job outlook, education and training requirements, licenses and certificates, median salaries, and host of other information that will be useful when you speak to an employer.

Check Your Supply Against Demand - As you plan your outreach efforts, make sure you have sufficient candidates to meet the demand you are creating for any particular occupation.

Use a Mix of Outreach Strategies and Track their Effectiveness – No single strategy will reach every employer you want to target. Treat your outreach strategy as you would an investment portfolio and invest in a variety of methods. Determine what works and what does not and adjust your portfolio accordingly. Consider using e-mail blasts and surveys, direct mailings, newspaper advertisements, billboards, flyers and poster, press releases, social media, public service announcements, participation in employer events and conferences, presentations at chamber of commerce, economic development organizations, Rotary Clubs, and the local chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management, and job fairs. Don't neglect to use your personal network as well. This can include participants who are employed, parole and probation officers, and members of your agency's staff and board members.

Engage Employers as Champions for your Project – Whenever possible, your outreach strategies should use employer testimonials that highlight the benefits of partnering with your program. If your program is new, ask your board members to provide testimonials until you can engage employers who hire your program participants.

Use a Database of Employers – In today's rapidly change marketplace of employers, the use of an up-to-date database will help ensure that you don't miss any opportunities.

A Helpful Question to Ask

When meeting an employer for the first time, an excellent question to ask is, "Tell me about the best employee you ever had."   It not only yields information about the employer's expectations of his or her workers and the business's culture, it demonstrates your interest in serving their interests.

Develop a Working Relationship with a Local Labor Market Expert – A local labor market expert can not only keep you apprised of employment trends, they may be aware of employers who are planning to relocate to your area. The Bureau of Labor Statistics maintains a [State Labor Market Information Contact List](#). A [Directory of State LMI Agencies](#) is also maintained by the Labor Market Information Institute.

Do a Web Site and Social Media Check-Up - If your Internet presence is static and merely

Don't create a list of "felon-friendly" employers

Although it might be tempting to create a list of your "felony-friendly" employers, ***don't*** do it. The list will invariably fall into the hands of your clients who will copy it and distribute it to their friends who, in turn, will copy it and distribute it to their friends. This may cause your employers to be deluged by job seekers who are not qualified for employment. If the employer finds out that you generated the list, your efforts to build a relationship with them might be irreparably damaged. Job interview referrals to employers should be made in writing and clients should be instructed not to share these referrals with anyone else.

serves as an online brochure for your program, you may be missing out on an opportunity to build interest and support with employers and other stakeholders in your community. It's particularly important to provide employers with a separate web page that features the benefits your program offers the business community. You also want to establish the expertise of project staff through employer testimonials and successful case studies. As you develop this section of your web site, consider the questions or concerns that an employer might have, and make sure that your content answers these questions. For a complete checkup list, please see [Is Your Web Site a Strong Marketing Tool? Take Time for a Web Site Checkup!](#)

Write a Press Release – An article in a local newspaper or a story broadcast on a local television station increases the visibility of your program and adds to its credibility. A well-written press release is an essential tool for getting your story picked up by the media. But if it's poorly written and doesn't follow a standard format, the likelihood of getting that attention is slim to none. [How to Write a Press Release that Works](#) provides the information needed to write an effective release that gets noticed.

Using QR Codes to Connect Employers to Your Web Site

QR Codes are two-dimensional, square shaped symbols that look like a maze. When a QR Code is scanned by a smartphone or a tablet's camera, the user is directed immediately to a specific webpage. It's very easy to create a QR Code at no cost using online tools and these symbols can be placed on business cards, brochures, and posters.   A guide to using them is included in the appendix.

Write a Public Service Announcement - A radio public service announcement (PSA) is a brief message about a non-profit agency's activities, programs and events that is aired by local radio stations. They typically range from 15 to 60 seconds and are aired at no cost. While radio stations are not mandated to play PSAs, they are required by the Federal Communications Commission to serve "in the public interest." Most radio stations will use PSAs to meet this requirement and will donate a portion of the commercial spots to non-profit agencies. A PSA can be used to inform employers of the services you provide and provides an opportunity for your message to reach a wide audience. Using Radio Public Service Announcements offers a complete guide to writing and distributing a public service announcement that is likely to get aired by a local radio station.

Use LinkedIn to Identify Employment Opportunities – Depending on the nature of the training that is provided to your participants or the type of work they are pursuing, it may be advisable to set up a "job alert" on LinkedIn that will notify you via email whenever a new job gets posted that meets a specified set of criteria. To do this click "Jobs" at the top of your homepage and then click "Advanced" next to the search bar at the top of the page. On the advanced search screen, enter the keywords and location for the position sought. Click search and then click the "Save Search" link in the top right corner of the search results. When you save the search, you can choose to receive daily, weekly or monthly alerts. For additional guidance, please see the bulletin Using LinkedIn to Recruit Trainees and Identify Job Openings.

Engaging Employers in Program Activities

In addition to asking for testimonials, there are many other ways to engage employers in support of your efforts. You can ask them to serve on a business advisory committee or your board of directors, participate in program activities such as mock interviews, or promote your advocacy efforts. For more tips, see the bulletin, Engaging Employers: Building Long-Term Employer Relationships.

Identifying Employer Needs – Before pitching your services, you should determine the employer's human service needs. Some this can be done in advance of a meeting by checking the employer's website, doing a Google search on the company, or reviewing information gleaned from a trade association website. When you meet with an employer, encourage them to discuss their needs and document those needs in the job order, preferably using contact management software. The job order should contain contact information, job title and duties, drug test requirements, job requirements, compensation and benefits, work schedule, a description of work setting and culture, availability of public transportation, and projected start date. Periodically conduct a customer satisfaction survey with the employers who are receiving your services. A template for this survey is included in the appendix of this document.

Help Employers Secure the Work Opportunity Tax Credit – One of the most valuable tools available developers is the Work Opportunity Tax Credit which provides tax incentives to employers who hire recently released persons convicted of felonies and other classes of disadvantaged persons. Many employers are unaware of the tax credit or believe that the paperwork needed to receive it is burdensome. You should not only inform them of its availability, but be prepared to assist them with the paperwork which, contrary to their fears, is not burdensome.

Use the Federal Bonding Program – The Federal Bonding Program was established by the U.S. Department of Labor to provide fidelity bonds for "at-risk," hard-to-place job seekers. "At risk" persons include justice-involved individuals, person in recovery from substance use disorders, welfare recipients, individuals with poor credit records, economically disadvantaged youth, and adults who lack work histories, and individuals dishonorably discharged from the military.

Fidelity bonds protect the employer for employee dishonesty including: theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement. Employers receive the FBP bonds free-of-charge as an incentive to hire these applicants. Each bond has a $5,000 limit with $0 deductible and covers the first six months of a selected individual's employment.

Bonds can be obtained through your State Bonding Coordinator or your local American Job Center. A communications toolkit that includes brochures, posters, and flyers is available on the Federal Bonding Program website.

Identifying High Growth Occupations for Persons with Criminal Convictions - The Labor Market Information (LMI) Worksheet provided in the Appendix is a guide for evaluating labor market supply and demand for a particular occupational title in your state and local region. It is self-guiding with each question building on the previous one. As you follow each question and supporting links, you will acquire an additional piece of information that, when put together, will help in guiding your participant in making an informed career choice about a particular

occupation. The worksheet can also be used by an organization to explore the feasibility of implementing an employment training initiative for persons with criminal convictions.

Taking the Job Order - To ensure a good match, job developers need to carefully gather and document the needs of each employer. It is advisable to use contact management software to track engagement with employers, preferably using a product that is mobile friendly. In addition to company contact information, the job order should include:

- Job title and job duties
- If a security clearance, criminal background check, credit check and/or drug test is required
- Job requirements (education, training, skills, licenses, certifications)
- Compensation and benefits
- Work schedule, including overtime requirements
- Description of work setting and culture
- Accessibility to public transportation
- Special job requirements (laptop, mobile Internet access, uniforms, tools, etc.)
- Projected start date
- Referred candidates and date and time of interview appointment

Managing the Job Application and Interview Process - A program participant's visit with a job developer should be viewed as an opportunity to prepare him or her for a job interview and to assess their readiness for job placement. Appointments should be scheduled and punctuality should be noted along with other factors that reflect on the participant's readiness to enter employment. The job developer should document that the candidate is prepared for a job interview according to the following standards:

- Has arrived punctually for all appointments
- Has an error-free resume appropriate for targeted occupation
- Has the ability to receive critical feedback
- Has access to reliable transportation
- Has access to reliable childcare and backup, if applicable
- Has a positive attitude and engagement in the job search process
- Has access to appropriate clothing for the job interview
- Has adequate documents required by employers when applying for employment

In the sales profession, it's often said that "the fortune is in the follow-up." Follow-up that is documented by the job developer benefits the training participant and the employer and contributes greatly to meeting both placement and retention goals. If a program participant

does not have a successful job interview, it is important to touch base with the employer and determine why. Factors to consider include punctuality, appearance, attitude, and adequacy of skills for the job.

Recognize your Employers – Don't wait until an annual award ceremony or graduation to acknowledge the contributions of the employers in your network. An occasional thank-you letter or email can go a long way to building a working relationship. Most employers would welcome the opportunity for free publicity in the event that your agency is featured in a local television news broadcast. Be sure to secure their permission in advance in the event that they prefer to keep a lower profile.

Job Placement Project Management Checklist – If you are in the last months of a grant funded project and have work to do to meet the its job placement requirements, take the steps necessary to reorient you placement efforts:

STEP #1: FOCUS ON THE GOALS

- ✓ Focus on job placement match goals that meet your local needs. It is "Job One!!!"

STEP #2: BUILD A CHECKLIST

- ✓ Use this project management checklist as a starting point to ensure every step taken leads to success.

STEP #3: EXPAND THE JOB PLACEMENT TEAM

- ✓ Identify the right individuals who will focus on job placement as a high priority; they are the job placement team.
- ✓ Identify specific roles and responsibilities for each person on the team.
- ✓ Identify a team leader who will coordinate all tasks of the team.

STEP #4: DEVELOP TASKS

- ✓ Assign tasks to each person with timeframes for each activity.
- ✓ Schedule regular and frequent meetings.
- ✓ Create internal performance measures for job placement and follow-up services that are tied to the project's objectives.
- ✓ Provide written performance updates each month.

✓ Track and map performance.

STEP #5: CONNECT WITH BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYERS

✓ Identify the businesses/employers that are aligned as much as possible with the
✓ curriculum/certification in areas students are graduating.
✓ Contact each employer which you have a relationship. This is your "A" list.
✓ Develop a "B" list of employers through research including Chambers of Commerce,
✓ Economic Development Organizations and Trade Associations.
✓ Then develop a plan to contact both the "A and B" list to inform them of the project and to gain a commitment to review your graduates' skills and resumes.
✓ Ask the employers to hire your graduates.
✓ Prominently display progress toward goals such as posting on a wall in the team location.
✓ Chart the progress towards the placement goal.
✓ Track placements on a map to compare employer and placement locations.

STEP #6: JOB PLACEMENT

✓ Connect pending graduates with the employers/businesses *before* they graduate.
✓ If the students have graduated, connect with employers and businesses in organized events such as job fairs, engage students in concentrated and accelerated job search, partake in available community resources including American Job Centers, and utilize social media such as LinkedIn.
✓ **Job Placement Project Management Checklist –** If you are in the last months of a grant funded project and have work to do to meet the its job placement requirements, take

Providing Excellent Customer Service[11]

> *"The goal as a company is to have customer service that is not just the best, but legendary."*
>
> *Sam Walton, Founder of Walmart*

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[11] The section was based on the webinar, *Providing Excellent Customer Service.* A recording of that webinar can be viewed at http://coffey.adobeconnect.com/p99yynkh6i0/.

Customer service can be defined as meeting the needs of your customers in a way that has value to them. Employment and training programs have several customers. These include training participants and the employers who hire them. If you serve the family members of participants or others during the course of your work, they would be included as customers as well.

Crafting a great customer experience requires enormous collaboration between everyone in your program and its partners. As customers, we expect to be treated promptly and courteously. We want our needs to be met, our problems to be solved, and our experience to be personal. Your customers expect no less. Understanding your customer's journey is critical for making sure that you provide excellent customer service.

Your customer's journey is the steps your training participants and employers go through as they engage with your project. In the case of a training participant, that might include their initial contact with your project through an advertisement or announcement, the enrollment and assessment process, and training, job placement, and post-placement services. This diagram is a map for the journey that might be taken by a person who is applying for training.

Dealing with Employer Objections

Job developers should be prepared – through guided practice in advance – to deal with the common objections an employer may have toward hiring a person with a criminal record. These may include:

- Your applicants or under or over-qualified.
- There is too much red tape to deal with.
- Your applicants need too much attention.
- I prefer applicant who are employed.
- I prefer applicants with a steady work history.
- Let me think about it.

An excellent instructional activity for staff, *Overcoming Objections*, can be found in the facilitator's guide for Offender Employer Specialist Training. The activity can be found on pages 104 and 105.

Customer Journey Map

Illustrates the steps your customer(s) go through in engaging with your project.

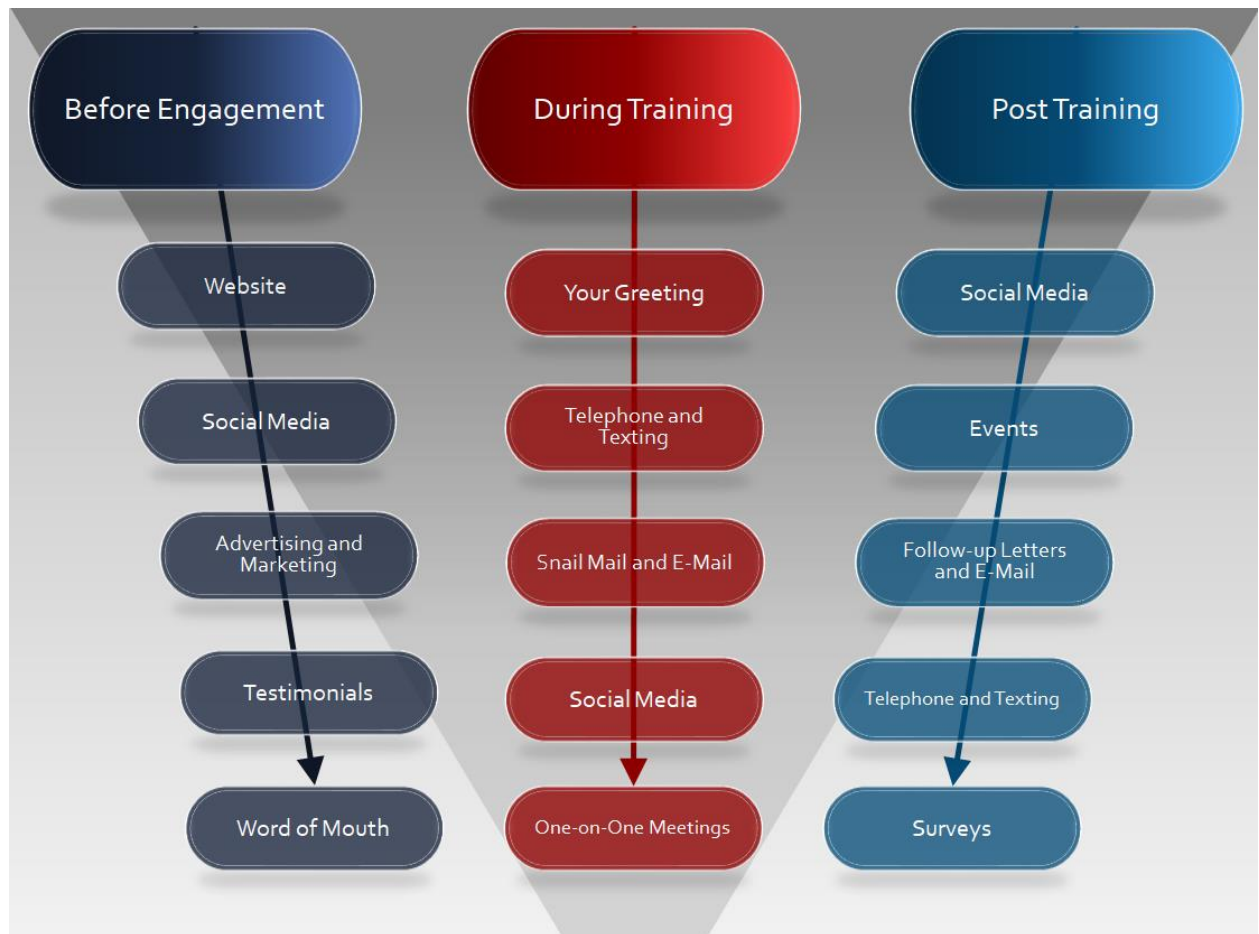Engage → Enroll → Assess → Train → Employment → Retention

A touch point is any time a potential customer or a customer comes in contact with your brand.

There are four categories of touch points:

- Products – Includes participant training, job placement services, and recruitment services provided to employers.
- Interactions – Includes in-person, telephone, or virtual interactions.
- Messages – Includes one way communications such as advertisements and brochures.
- Settings – Anywhere services are delivered or seen.

Your job is to identify your customer touch points by making a list of all the places and times your training participants and employers are touched by your project. This diagram illustrates the touchpoints that you might have with a training participant. For every stage in the process, you need to ask the following questions:

- What is the customer doing at each stage?
- What actions are they taking to move themselves on to the next stage?
- What keeps them motivated?
- What issues prevent the customer from moving to the next stage?
- What can we do to facilitate the process?

Helping Justice-Involved Individuals Secure Work that Pays a Living Wage

Before Engagement	During Training	Post Training
Website	Your Greeting	Social Media
Social Media	Telephone and Texting	Events
Advertising and Marketing	Snail Mail and E-Mail	Follow-up Letters and E-Mail
Testimonials	Social Media	Telephone and Texting
Word of Mouth	One-on-One Meetings	Surveys

As you look at your customer's journey, you want to look for opportunities for change. With your customers in mind, look for opportunities to:

- Improve your welcome
- Adapt your space
- Tailor your services
- Listen to your employers
- Create community
- Produce better outcomes and higher customer satisfaction

Seeking customer feedback is an excellent way to identify those touchpoints that require your attentions. Customer feedback surveys that can be used for training participants and employers are provided in the appendix.

A Resource for Practitioners - Developed by the National Institute of Corrections, The Employer-Driven Model and Toolkit provides examples of effective practices, strategies, tips and resources for implementing four key processes in an employer driven model. These processes include using labor market information to identify high-growth occupations and target specific businesses, addressing employer needs and expectations in marketing, placement, and job retention efforts., preparing justice-involved individuals for employment, with an emphasis on soft-skills and industry-standard training and certifications that will meet employers' expectations for qualified applicants and engaging stakeholders who can help provide critical resources and support services.

The Employer-Driven Employment Model and Toolkit provides a blueprint and resources needed to build an effective employer-driven job training and placement program for justice-involved individuals and outlines the steps needed to ensure that employment programs meet current and future labor market demands.

Employment Retention and Career Advancement

Employment retention services begin the very first day you have contact with a program participant and must be integrated into all phases of your program. Each staff person should understand the role they play in helping graduates retain employment and be aware of the project's employment retention objectives. To ensure accountability, employment retention outcomes should be tracked and reported to all project staff members on a regular basis.

Retention Planning – Just as you did with other aspects of your project, review the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA), project proposal, and statement of work to confirm the employment retention commitments made by your program. You'll want to develop a plan to guide employment retention activities that includes:

- employment retention goals for each month or quarter of the project
- a mechanism for tracking employment retention outcomes and reporting those outcomes to project staff and partners
- strategies that will be used to maintain contact with program graduates
- the support services you will provide graduates either directly, through partnerships, or by referral
- a mechanism for using employment retention data for continuous quality improvement

To give a consistent message to staff members that retention is every person's responsibility, all staff job descriptions should reflect a focus on employment retention. A similar message should be given to all project stakeholders by having your marketing materials reflect a commitment to keeping people employed in a career path of their choosing. Supervisors and all grant-funded staff should understand and be aware of employment retention outcomes and summary reports on employment retention should be provided to them on a regular basis. You should schedule performance review meetings on a regular basis and at appropriate intervals.

Support Services - To ensure that your graduates successfully adapt to the workplace and stay employed, they may require access to resources beyond those provided directly by your program. Program staff must be prepared to make referrals to the appropriate resources through referral. Develop partnerships with community-based organizations that can provide participants assistance with:

- housing

- financial challenges
- healthcare
- childcare
- transportation

Use Motivational Interviewing Technique to Support Retention - Familiarize project staff members with motivational interviewing techniques that can be used to respond to signs of impending job loss such as loss of enthusiasm, chronic lateness, failure to make work a priority, and a lack of confidence, etc.

Help Program Participants Develop Contingency Plans – As part of the career planning process, program participants should be encouraged to develop contingency plans for events that are likely to happen.

Encourage participants to contact staff when a work problem is anticipated or occurs - Provide the flexibility and capacity to respond to urgent requests for assistance outside of normal working hours.

Tracking and Follow-Up - Maintaining close contact with program participants following graduation is essential for achieving employment retention outcomes. The use of a variety of methods helps maintain contact and offers multiple opportunities for providing timely guidance and assistance. Use a variety of methods to stay in touch with program graduates that include:

- **Telephone calls** - Since phone numbers can change, obtain several backup numbers, preferably those of relatives or a close friend of the participant. You can never have enough back-up numbers! Always determine the best time to reach out to each participant in advance of calling them.
- **E-mail -** Because your participants and program graduates are likely to receive many e-mails every day, you need to make sure that the content of your message stands out and gets their attention. Be sure to personalize your message. For example, let them know that you are interested in learning how they are coming along with their search for employment or, if they are employed, how they are doing on the job. If they are working, include the name of the employer in your message. You also want to provide added value to your message. Inform the participant or program graduate about an upcoming career event that might be of value to them. You might want to start out your e-mail by writing, "We're organizing an alumni networking event next month and thought you'd be interested in attending." It's always a good idea to share positive news about a program graduate who landed a career opportunity. Whenever possible, explain how your services connected the successful job applicant to the employer and

helped him or her secure the position. Finally, always include a "next step." Every e-mail should have a next step and used to build on ongoing relationship with the participant. This may involve setting up a time to talk by telephone or arranging a face-to-face meeting in your office. If possible, considering videoconferencing using Skype or a similar service.

- **Regular mail -** While e-mails are easy and efficient, don't underestimate the power of snail mail. Consider sending participants birthday wishes or congratulatory hand-written notes.
- **Texting** – Although younger participants may prefer texting over telephone calls, more and more adults are using this form of communication. Find out their preference and use it.
- **Social Media** – Be sure to record the participant's Facebook and LinkedIn pages as a potential contact source.
- **Privately funded incentives -** Incentives always work best when they part of a comprehensive approach, consistently applied and tailored to meet individual needs. Positive reinforcement does not have to be costly. For example, sending an e-mail or a written note to a participant that recognizes improved grades or a special accomplishment can serve as a powerful motivator. A phone call can also serve the same purpose. Because some participants may be struggling financially, incentives such as gift cards or discount cards can serve not only to motivate, but can help meet basic living needs. It may be possible to solicit donations of movie, theater, or sporting events tickets which provide opportunities for group events. This promotes bonding between participants and helps them build their professional network outside the classroom.
- **Online surveys –** Consider using [SurveyMonkey](#) to get feedback from participants and keep tabs on their progress.
- **Newsletters –** An online newsletter that provides your participants with job hunting tips or other information of value them and is a good strategy for staying in touch.
- **Support groups –** Support groups such as job clubs offer opportunities for mutual support that is essential for a successful transition to the community.
- **Mentors -** To further enhance your support services, considering enlisting the assistance of project alumni or engaging volunteer mentors.
- **Workshops -** One of the best ways to ensure long-term success is to help participants develop a career advancement plan. Postgraduate workshops can be used to facilitate this process and keep you connected them.

Job Clubs - Job clubs are small, facilitated groups that meet regularly to assist members in their search for employment. These collaborative groups foster networking, offer moral support, and

can provide a wide variety of job search assistance. Some job clubs have an educational component in which useful job search skills are taught by the facilitator or invited speakers. While workforce professionals may serve as facilitators for job clubs, many are successfully led by volunteers from faith- or community-based organizations.

If you want to start a job club for your program participants, there are several steps you can take to facilitate the process:

- **Define the purpose of the job club.** Because the purpose of the club will drive the rest of your decisions, you want to clarify the reasons for starting one. You'll want to determine what the job club will do and who will it serve. Will the club focus on enhancing job search skills or will its primary purpose be networking and sharing job leads? Will you invite all of your participants to attend or will you have groups based on the credential acquired by participants? Clarity of purpose will help in making the decisions that follow.
- **Investigate other job clubs.** There may be a job club in your community that meets the needs of your participants. If there is, you may want to partner with that job club and leverage resources. If the local job club or clubs do not meet your needs, it is still a good idea to speak to their organizers and, perhaps, attend one or two of their sessions. There may be opportunities to work together, lessons to learn, or materials to borrow that can pave the way for the successful implementation of your job club. CareerOneStop maintains a Job Club Finder that can be used to find a job club in your community.
- **Form a small design team.** It is helpful to have a small team of two to three committed people to help in the design, decision-making, and implementation process. They should be tasked with creating the organization's policy and procedure guidelines for the job club, proposing and developing partnerships in support of it, acquiring the needed resources, and publicizing it. It is important to have either one person or a small group who is committed to planning and conducting the job club to ensure continuity.
- **Form partnerships.** Partnerships with a One-Stop Career Center, community-based organizations, and faith-based groups can help start the job club and provide resources and ideas. They may be able to provide space that is convenient to your club's participants, guest speakers, and other forms of support beyond the scope or resources of your training program.
- **Name the job club.** You want to give your club a name that reflects its purpose and helps establish its brand. It should give a clear message that connects to your target audience and conveys your agency's ability to meet their needs.

- **Establish a consistent meeting day, time, and place.** You'll want to consider transportation needs and the availability of your target members as you plan when and where to meet. Meeting once a week is ideal, and the meeting should be at least an hour and not longer than two. You should allow sufficient time for everyone to participate. The schedule of the meeting can affect its purpose. Meetings at the beginning of the week tend to focus on motivating participants for the days ahead, and meetings at the end of the week provide more of an opportunity to review job search efforts.
- **Establish parameters.** You'll need to decide how many people you will accept into the club. Groups should be small enough to allow everyone the opportunity to speak and large enough to create the synergy needed for success.
- **Find or train a facilitator.** A good facilitator is important to ensure that meetings stay on track and everyone has the chance to participate and benefit from the club. Ideally, the facilitator should have workforce development experience. He or she should have good leadership skills and be comfortable speaking in front of a group.
- **Publicize the job club.** Even a well-designed job club will not succeed if it does not attract a sufficient number of participants. You'll need to conduct outreach to ensure that your target population knows about the club and how it may help them. If your program is using social media, consider setting up a LinkedIn group or Facebook page for job club participants where they can share their experiences between sessions.
- **Determine the club's values and rules.** Most job clubs have a set of rules that reflect their core values. The rules serve as guides for how members will interact and may be formalized into a "member agreement" or "covenant." Examples of job club rules include:
    - Attend all meetings. Let someone know in advance if you cannot attend.
    - Maintain the confidentiality of the other members.
    - Participate honestly in the job club – with enthusiasm and compassion.
    - Share your knowledge and experience.
    - Be respectful of one another. Be encouraging; give constructive feedback.
    - Give and accept help.
    - Do not monopolize the group - let everyone have a turn.
    - Pay-it-forward. When you find a job, return to assist others.
    - Limit the amount of time spent complaining.
- **Decide on a meeting flow.** Job club sessions should have an agenda which will vary depending upon the purpose or focus of the group. Below are two sample agendas. One is for a job club that focuses on networking and the other is for a skills-focused support group.

- **Create a list of speakers and topics in advance.** Some job clubs – often those with an educational focus – have a standard curriculum covered cyclically over a set number of weeks (e.g., 10 weeks). Others are less structured and more fluid. In either case, you want to create a list of topics to cover and speakers you would like to invite in advance. Consider inviting industry experts, HR managers, and placement agency representatives.
- **Know your limitations.** A job club facilitator must know the limits of his/her expertise and be prepared to fill in the knowledge gap with speakers or experts.
- **Develop a list of referral resources.** Many job club attendees will have needs that may be barriers to employment. It is helpful to have a list or database of referral resources available at the meetings so that these needs can be addressed as they are identified.
- **Provide handouts to the group.** To add value to each session, it's useful to develop and distribute handouts that reinforce the concepts covered in a session or serve as a resource in the job search process. These may include self-assessment instruments, job search organizers and schedulers, networking tips, sample thank you letters, etc.
- **Celebrate success.** When a job club member secures employment, invite them to return and celebrate his/her success. This provides positive reinforcement for the mutual efforts of participants and helps motivate those who are searching for employment.
- **Establish a pay-it-forward culture.** Encourage members who find employment to return and assist others. They can help participants develop their network or serve as mentors.
- **Create a LinkedIn group.** LinkedIn is a social media website that is frequently used by human resource professionals to identify and vet job candidates. It is very useful to create a closed LinkedIn group for a job club. The group can be used to share information about upcoming events, post job announcements, and provide a forum for group members to share their experiences or request assistance.
- **Engage in assessment and renewal.** Job clubs need to be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that they are meeting the needs of participants. It is recommended that you
- **Distribute a brief evaluation form at the end of each session.** You should be prepared to adapt the club's activities because the dynamics and needs of the group may evolve as turnover occurs.
- **Get the word out!** As your job club gains traction and gets results, reach out to the local media and let them know about your efforts. Media coverage will help your organization and job club members expand their network of employers.

Predictive Indicators of Job Loss - Workers lose employment for a variety of reasons, whether by dismissal or self-initiated departure. While poor performance is probably the most cited reason for being dismissed from a job, others include poor attendance and punctuality, failing to follow directions or company policies, and bringing personal problems to the workplace. An employee may choose to leave employment if the job does not meet their expectations or if they don't feel valued by their supervisor or co-workers. Other reasons for leaving employment include feeling overworked or micromanaged, not fitting into the culture of the company, and believing that the company offers few prospects for advancement. While there is not set "script" that should be used when you follow-up with a graduate or their employer, there are a number of questions that can be asked to identify the risks associated with job loss and provide opportunities for job retention interventions.

This matrix presents the risk of job loss based on the perceived satisfaction expressed by the employer and employee. The greater degree of satisfaction possessed by both parties, the lower the risk of job loss.

It is possible for an employee to be satisfied with their job and be unaware that their employer is not satisfied with their performance. Likewise, it is possible for an employer to be satisfied with an employee who expresses dissatisfaction with their job. In both of these cases, there is a risk of job loss. This makes it necessary to touch base with both the employee and the employer when making follow-up calls.

Demonstrating a Lack of Enthusiasm - A lack of enthusiasm is a significant warning sign, especially if the graduate was eager to begin work upon completion of their course of

instruction. A good way to assess a graduate's attitude about work is to ask an open-ended question: "How is it going for you at work?" If the program graduate responds without enthusiasm (for example, "It's a job."), seek more information. You can ask, "You don't sound enthusiastic about work. Are you having a problem? Is there anything I can do to help?"

Use a job loss assessment ruler to identify their risk of job loss. ("On a scale of one to ten with one being highly likely and ten being highly unlikely, where are you?") If, for example, the graduate points to six, ask, "What would it take to get you to seven or eight?"

Check-in with the employee's supervisor and assess their perception of the program graduate's attitude towards work. If their perceptions are similar, the risk of job loss is high. Keep the graduate focused on their long-term career plan. Provide them with a copy of the **Individual Career Plan for Advancement** and review it with them. Remind them that the job is a stepping stone that will allow them to reach their long-term goal. If a workplace conflict is evident, provide the program graduate with guidance on resolving disagreements. This might include staying calm, using active listening, and seeking win-win situations.

Not Meeting the Expectations of Supervisors - The fastest way to get dismissed from employment is not to meet the expectations of a supervisor. Ask the employee about his or her attendance and lateness record, their ability to efficiently complete job tasks, how the quality of their work is perceived, and how well they are getting along with their supervisor. Do they feel overworked or micromanaged? Are they able to meet the physical and mental demands of the job? If they complain about being assigned work that is not in their job description that may be warning sign that they are not getting along with their supervisor. If a program graduate has not been employed for a considerable period of time, they may not be aware of the rise in workplace expectations that has taken place.

Several strategies can be used to deal with this situation. Empathize with them, give them positive feedback for their work accomplishments, and encourage them to take steps that will help them cope with the demands of the job. Coach them to meet or exceed the expectations of their supervisor. Ask them to consider the following question each day: "How can I make my supervisor's job easier?"

Confirm the employer's expectations and offer the program graduate solutions for coping with their situation. Touch base with the employee's supervisor to determine their level of satisfaction with the program graduate and what can be done to improve their performance.

Engaging Mentors to Improve Retention Outcomes

Mentoring can be an effective way to improve employment retention outcomes for justice-involved individuals. The success of any mentoring effort depends on many factors. These include how effectively the mentors are recruited, selected, trained, and matched with mentees; the extent to which the relationship is monitored and supported; and the arrangements made for closure of the relationship. If you have a mentor program and are seeking to enhance it or want to develop a mentor program in support of your retention efforts, you'll want to review these resources:

Mentoring as a Component of Reentry: Practical Considerations from the Field - This publication from the National Reentry Resource Center offers five broad, field-based practical considerations for incorporating mentoring into reentry programs for adults.

Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring - The Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™ represent the research- and practitioner-informed recommended practices for implementing a quality youth mentoring program. They represent an excellent starting point for designing new programs and ensuring the quality of programs as they grow and mature over time

The Wisdom of Age: A Handbook for Staff - A comprehensive resource designed to offer program staff with specific tools and promising practices to best recruit, train and support mentors over the age of 50.

Mentoring Formerly Incarcerated Adults: Insights from the Ready4Work Reentry Initiative - This report explores mentoring as a tool for supporting the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated people within the context of a larger reentry strategy—in this case, the Ready4Work model. The report describes Ready4Work's mentoring component, the extent to which mentoring was attractive to participants, the types of adults who volunteered to serve as mentors and how receipt of mentoring was related to participant outcomes.

Mentoring Former Prisoners: A Guide for Reentry Programs - This guide was originally published by the U.S. Department of Labor in November 2007 under the title Mentoring Ex-Prisoners: A Guide for Prisoner Reentry Programs. Due to growing interest in providing mentoring services as part of larger reentry efforts around the country, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) reissued the guide with updated information related to P/PV's evaluation of the Ready4Work initiative.

Failing to Balance Job and Personal Demands - After an extended period of absence from the workforce, a program graduate may be surprised by how little time is available to deal with personal and family issues. Failure to balance one's work and personal obligations can lead to poor job performance and job loss. During your contact with employed program graduates, ask them about any challenges they may be facing at home. Are they able to make ends meet? Are their housing circumstances adequate? Do they have adequate child care? Be prepared to offer assistance and guidance, either directly or through referral, as required. If financial issues are a concern, review **Resources You Can Use to Help Students Cope with Financial Pressures** which

How Often Should Contact be Made?

While there is no fixed rule for making follow-up contact with employed program graduates, many programs find it useful to make contact at the end of the first day, weekly for the first month of employment, and monthly after that. More frequent contact can be made if there are indicators of job loss and less if both the employer and the program graduate express a high degree of satisfaction. It's also useful to have contact with both employer and program graduate around the time the first job performance review is scheduled. This will give you some insight into what additional improvements need to be made and how well your program's training has served the employer's needs.

is included in the appendix.

Effective Coaching Tools and Techniques - To maximize job placement and retention outcomes it is very useful to have a set of techniques and tools that can be used to coach program participants and graduates. Coaching can help develop the career potential of program participants by serving as a sounding board and offering fresh perspectives to the challenges associated with the job search process. It also can sharpen decision-making skills, improve interpersonal effectiveness, and increase confidence. This section will provide you with several coaching tools and techniques, all of which can be used to help participants overcome any internal or external barriers that might prevent their successful entry into the workforce. If your project engages mentors, you may want to share this information with them and encourage them to use it as a resource.

Journaling - Journaling is a coaching tool in which a person keeps a daily record of his or experiences and, through this activity, gains greater self-awareness. You can ask a participant to record their observations as they search for employment or provide them with homework assignments designed to encourage self-reflection. In either case, the objective would be to focus the participant's attention on the actions he or she needs to take to secure and maintain

employment and achieve their career objectives. Journaling has many benefits. It encourages the analysis of alternatives, promotes the generation of new ideas, and provides a place to record networking contacts, lessons learned, and daily achievements.

To increase the effectiveness of this activity, a participant should be encouraged to set a regular time of day to record his or her observations. You will also want to encourage them to use their journal to record daily or weekly objectives, keep track of their progress, and record information that they gather through their professional contacts and informational interviews. A journal is a safe place for them express their feelings about the job search process, both

Whose plan is it?

> Whose plan is it? You've probably rented a car at some point in your life. Have you ever brought it to the car wash before you returned it? Probably not. After all, you didn't own it and why should you take special care of it? For the same reason you want your participant to design their plan. If you design it for them, they are much less likely to complete the action steps.

positive and negative.

Action Planning - The action plans of program participants often lack specific and measurable tasks that can be used during coaching sessions to create accountability. As a coach, you want to encourage the participant to design a plan that has small steps, each of which can be measured. One coaching technique that increases the success of action planning involves asking the following question for each step in the action plan: "On a scale of 'one' to 'ten' with 'one' being highly unlikely and 'ten' being highly likely, how confident are you that you will complete this task?" If, for example, the client indicates a "five," you can ask, "What would it take to get you to 'six' or 'seven?'" This gives the client the opportunity to tell you what they need to achieve success and promotes their ownership of the process.

Effective Coaching Techniques - Lecturing, confronting, and directing are not effective coaching techniques. Greater success can be achieved through the use of good listening skills and an empathetic coaching style that engages the participant through open-ended questions and reflections. As you coach participants, consider the following:

- Are you doing all the work and serving as an expert or are you collaborating with your participant and serving as a guide in the process? The latter is a much more effective technique.

- Are you asking the participant to clarify and elaborate? For example, "You said you were nervous about asking for an informational interview. What would it take to make you more confident?"

- Are you using opportunities to query extremes? If, for example, a program participant is a procrastinator and delays making decisions, you may want to ask, "If you decide to take this position, what's the worst that could happen if the job does not work out?" Alternatively, you can ask the client to look forward by saying, "If this job works out for you, how do you see your life turning out?"

- Are you using opportunities to explore decisional balance? If a program participant is impulsive and is prone to making rash decisions, you may want to ask, "If you decide to do that, what are the advantages and disadvantages of making that choice?"

Time Management Tip

Given all the demands placed on program participants and the related tasks that must be accomplished, they will invariably need to prioritize what needs to be done and use a to-do list to ensure that they don't forget to do something that is important. They are many apps for creating to-do lists, but did you know that Gmail provides one at no cost? To learn how to access and use this feature, visit https://support.google.com/mail/answer/106237?hl=en.

- Are you consistently providing positive reinforcement as the participant demonstrates progress? Everyone likes to be affirmed.

- Are you using open-ended questions such as, "What are you finding stressful about your preparation for the credentialing exam?"

- Are you ending your coaching sessions with an open-ended question that confirms and strengthens a participant's commitment to action. For example, "What are the next steps you need to take to put your plan into action?"

Stress is a feeling participants can experience when the demands of the coursework or the job search process exceed their capacity to cope with it. Left unchecked, it can have a negative

effect on their ability to complete training, secure work and maintain employment. The following tips can be used to help participants cope with stress in a positive way. Some can be incorporated into your daily training activities and others can be provided through extracurricular activities or referrals to an outside resource.

- **Incorporate stress relieving activities into your program's curriculum** – Stress relieving activities such as the use of stretch breaks, humorous attention getters at the beginning of a class and small group activities that promote networking can help trainees cope with stress.

- **Provide positive reinforcement throughout the training** - Acknowledging accomplishments, either formally of informally, can promote a sense of well-being and reduce stress. Never underestimate the power of affirming a participant's progress in the course.

- **Encourage the use of study groups** – Collaborative study not only increases academic performance, it offers a platform for building social networks that reduce isolation and its associated stress.

- **Sponsor a job club** – These collaborative groups can reduce the stress associated the job search process by fostering networking and providing mutual moral support. If you can't sponsor a job club, [Careeronestop's job club finder](#) can be used to identify support groups in your community.

- **Use informal activities to build a social support network within the program** - Informal activities such as group picnics or dinner outings can mitigate the effect of stress by strengthening a participant's social support network.

- **Help participants expand their social networks outside of the program** – Connecting trainees to [volunteer opportunities](#) and [Meetup](#) groups can expand a participant's social network and provide opportunities for relieving the stress associated with a long-term absence from the workforce.

- **Conduct a brief stress assessment** - It may be helpful to administer a short "assessment" quiz to help participants identify their stress levels and their ability to cope. Alternatively a "stress ruler" can be used. (On a scale of 1-10 with "1" being "no stress at all" and "10" being "extremely stressed," where are you?)

- **Help participants sharpen their time management skills** – If a participant is overwhelmed by the coursework and personal obligations, provide them with guidance on how to prepare and prioritize a list of tasks that need to be accomplished. Breaking up these tasks into smaller steps can make them more manageable. You also want to encourage them to schedule regular times for activities that are healthy and relaxing.

- **Provide stress reduction guidance** – This can include printed materials, one-on-one counseling and support, and the use of volunteers who can teach stress reduction techniques such as deep breathing, muscle relaxation, and replacing negative thinking with positive talk. Ideally, you want your participants to view stressful situations as an opportunity to practice and apply these skills.

- **When to make a referral** – If a participant is overwhelmed by stress and expresses feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, it's appropriate and necessary to make a referral to mental health professional.

Family Services - Research has demonstrated that incarcerated persons who maintain contact with supportive family members have better employment outcomes than those who do not. Attention should, therefore, be paid to supporting family connections with individuals who are leaving jail or prison and support those connections following release. When they are incarcerated, you can explore the strength of their family connections with questions such as these:

- Who has visited you?
- Who stays in touch with you?
- Who has been there for you?
- Who will be supportive of you when you go home?
- Who will rely on you when you return home?

If they cannot identify any supportive relatives, explore other significant relationships. Encourage them to think about "family" in broad terms and to stay connected with individuals who have provided support in the past. You'll also want to review the Directory of Programs Serving Children & Families of the Incarcerated to determine what specialized resources, if any, are available for their families in your community.

To help program participants consider the role that family and community will play in their reentry plan, encourage them to create a **life portfolio** which identifies goals and objectives for family and other support systems. A recording of the webinar [Creating a Career/Life Portfolio](#) provides detailed guidance on how this planning tool can be used to assist program participants in their reentry efforts.

Planning for Sustainability

It takes much more than money to sustain a program's benefits over time. To succeed in the long run, a program must develop its capacity to sustain itself. Research conducted by the Washington University in St. Louis has determined that there are eight organizational factors that can help build that capacity. This section will familiarize you with these factors and provide you with resources related to each.

Building Environmental Support - To sustain their benefits over time, programs need the strong support of their internal and external stakeholders.   External stakeholders can include legislators and other government officials, the media, employers, local community boards, the families of the persons you serve, your program's partners and others. Internal stakeholders include, but are not limited to your board of directors, your agency's leadership, your staff, your participants, and your advisory committees.

It's important to identify all of your internal and external stakeholders. One way of doing this is to conduct a stakeholder analysis in which you identify your stakeholders and determine the degree to which each has an interest in your work and the extent to which each has influence over your project.

There are many ways to build stakeholder support for your project. One way is to identify an influential person who can serve as champion for your work. Another way is to engage volunteers in your efforts to inform the public about your work. They could help develop success stories, update your website, and deliver information about your program at community events. Whatever role they take, it's important to have a consistent central message about your program and the results it has achieved.

<div align="center">

Resources for Building Environmental Support

</div>

- How to conduct a stakeholder analysis
- Communicating with policy makers
- The Community Toolbox: Recognizing allies

Building Funding Stability - Having a stable and consistent financial base for your services is a critical factor for sustaining the benefits of your project over time. Planning for funding stability should be a strategic process with short-term and long-term goals for acquiring a diverse and stable funding base.   Your plan should be adaptable to trends and open to new funding opportunities.

Because the search for new funding opportunities can be very labor intensive, you should make sure that you have support within your organization to do so. You'll want to consider state and local community grants, foundations, support from local government, individuals and business donors, and fundraising events.

Don't chase after dollars that do not support your core mission. Your focus should be on building a financial base for those elements of your project that have demonstrated their effectiveness.

Resources for Building Funding Stability

- [A Beginner's Guide to Fundraising](#)
- [The Community Toolbox: Writing a Grant Application for Funding](#)
- [Foundation Finder](#)

Building Partnerships - Partners can promote you project's sustainability by providing services, resources, and expertise. They can also serve as advocates for your program and help you secure public and private support for your work.

You'll want to seek out persons and organizations who are not currently involved your efforts, but have an interest in your work.   As you develop partnerships, you need to identify how each party will benefit from the relationship and set goals for your collaborative efforts.

The key to maintaining a successful partnership is good communication. Determine how often you will communicate with your partners and what methods you will use based on their preference. You will want to consider the use of telephone calls, e-mails, newsletters, social media and face-to-face meetings. Periodically review the contacts you have made with your partners to ensure that you have communicated with all of them on a regular basis.

Sharing success stories is an excellent way to nurture a partnership. It affirms that the partnership has value and gives positive reinforcement to all involved parties.

Resources for Building Partnerships

- [The Community Toolbox: Creating and Maintaining Partnerships](#)

Building Organizational Capacity - The long-term success of a project depends heavily on the capabilities and knowledge of its leadership and staff. A survey of training needs should be conducted by a project's leadership and professional development opportunities should be sought were gaps in knowledge exist.

Resources for Building Organizational Capacity

- The Community Toolbox: Building Leadership
- WorkforceGPS Resource Library
- Reentry Employment Opportunities Collection

Building Program Evaluation Capacity - To achieve sustainability, a project needs to be evaluated on an ongoing basis. This not only helps to ensure that you can make any adjustments need to stay on track, it gives you the data needed to make a strong case for continuing your program. Use your management information reporting system reports to identify and address any programmatic problems in a timely way.

If a participant drops out of the program, determine why. Was there a need or a barrier that was not being addressed by the project? Was additional supervision and guidance required? Was the mentoring adequate for this individual or was additional support needed? View the failure of a participant as an opportunity to improve your programmatic efforts.

You should schedule regular meetings with your staff and partners to review program data and develop a plan for making necessary program changes.

Examine the program data you are collecting and put it in a format the can be easily understood by the general public and potential funding sources. Avoid the jargon that is commonly used in the employment and training community and supplement your data with memorable success stories that demonstrate the value of your efforts and bring your program to life.

Resources for Building Program Evaluation Capacity

- The Community Toolbox: Evaluate the Initiative
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook

Building the Capacity to Adapt – You'll want to pay special attention to practices that have been deemed to be evidenced-based. Both government and private funding sources are more likely to support your program if you can document that you are using evidence-based practices.

Resources for Building the Capacity to Adapt

- Surveys you can use to track employment outcomes and ellicit feedback from employers

- [The Community Toolbox: Program Adaptation](#)
- [Innovation and Opportunity Network](#)
- [Evidenced-based Practices in Corrections & Reentry](#)

Building the Capacity to Communicate - Your stakeholders and the general public need to know what your program does and why it is of value to the community. The more they understand your mission and accomplishments, the more likely they are to support your work. Your internal and external communications should not be haphazard. Rather, they should be

Using Storytelling to Share Your Program Successes

Whether you are recruiting participants, engaging employers, or seeking financial support for your project, story-telling is one of the most powerful tools you can use to achieve your objectives. The recorded webinar, [Using Storytelling to Share Your Program Successes](#), provides practical tips and guidance for telling a story that will evoke emotion, get your message across, and win support for your efforts. The webinar presenters describe how you can help your audience visualize your story, draw people into your story through the absence of information, and get your audience to sit up and take notice.

part of a plan that uses consistent messaging.

With more and more people using social media to stay informed about events and connect with each other, it has become an important communication tool for government, businesses and the non-profit community. Use social media to get the word out about your program and to get feedback from your stakeholders. You also want to establish contacts with media representatives in your community. It takes time to develop these relationships, but it is well worth the effort. A well-placed story in a local newspaper or a interview on a local television station can give you enormous exposure to the public in a short period of time.

Resources for Building the Capacity to Communicate

- [The Community Toolbox: Developing a Plan for Communication](#)

- [A guide for branding and marketing community corrections initiatives](#)

Additional Resource for Sustainability Planning

This section of the guide was based the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool developed by the Center for Public Health System Science at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. Their website allows you to rate the sustainability capacity of your project on each of the factors that have been described. This allows you to identify and focus on those factors that require the most attention. The website also provides additional resources that can be used to sustain your project's benefits over time.

The Sustainability Planning Guide and Tips for Sustainability, both of which were developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, should also be reviewed and used in your sustainability planning efforts. Each of these resources was designed to meet the special needs of programs that provide employment and training services.

Building the Capacity to Plan - Strategic planning ensures that your sustainability efforts are implemented in a coordinated way that is likely to achieve success. It should involve your internal and external network to ensure that you have everyone's input and support. Keep everyone apprised of the planning by maintaining a clear channel of communication throughout the process. Always keep in mind that your sustainability plan is a living document that needs to be periodically reviewed and modified as necessary. Whenever your program engages in strategic planning activities, you should revisit your plan for sustainability.

Resources for Building the Capacity to Plan

- The Community Toolbox: Developing a Strategic Plan

Helping Justice-Involved Individuals Secure Work that Pays a Living Wage

Appendix

Table of Contents

To successfully manage an employment and training program in a correctional setting, you need to be flexible and willing to adapt to a demanding and often unforgiving environment. You must also take the time needed to build strong relationships with the correctional staff and the prisoner population. Every correctional facility has a different culture. Some embrace change and welcome new approaches, while others may be reluctant to adopt the latest evidenced-based practices. If the latter is the case, your role as an advocate for employment and training services is to spark enthusiasm for your program's efforts and offer opportunities for incremental change that allows facility staff to see the full potential of your initiative. To that end, this toolkit provides a framework for planning, initiating and maintaining an employment and training program in a correctional setting. It offers strategies for overcoming the multiple challenges that exist and practical tips for building and maintaining relationships in that environment.

While the culture of correctional facilities can vary widely based on their size and function, most share a common mission that includes protecting the public's safety and promoting the successful community reintegration of the persons in their custody. Employment and training programs can help correctional facilities meet these objectives in two important ways. First, they can contribute to the safety and security of the facility by keeping inmates engaged in well-managed, pre-employment learning activities. Second, they can prepare and connect justice involved individuals to employment opportunities in the community, helping them to avoid re-arrest and re-incarceration. In recent years, correctional agencies have been called on to improve the reentry services provided to the persons in their custody and many are seeking the assistance of organizations that have the capacity to meet the pre-employment and training needs of the prisoner population.

Yet despite their value to correctional administrators, you may not always feel welcome in a jail or prison setting. You are subject to being searched upon entry to the facility and may be looked upon with suspicion by correctional staff, some of whom have a distrust of "outsiders." The facility's rules are likely to impose a dress code and may prohibit you from carrying personal belongings. More often than not, the facility's security requirements can interfere with the delivery of program services, making it a challenge to meet the objectives of your grant. It would be easy to fall into the trap of believing that jails and prisons offer challenges to the delivery of program services that cannot be overcome. There are, however, many

examples of programs in correctional facilities that have achieved their objectives and receive the full support of custodial staff. If you remain flexible in your approach and make efforts are made to build partnerships with correctional officials in support of your work, many, if not all of these challenges can be met. This toolkit will provide you with practical tips and strategies that can be used in a correctional environment to create win-win situations with correctional personnel that will allow you to achieve your grant's objectives. We'll start by looking at those challenges and their impact upon the delivery of program services in a correctional facility.

Security challenges – Most facilities require that staff and volunteers undergo a security clearance which can delay a hire and, consequently, delay the delivery of services. While not mutually exclusive, security usually takes precedent over the delivery of program services. An incident such as a disturbance, death, or an escape attempt can halt the delivery of service for an indefinite period.   When a facility is "locked down" all movement is stopped and it may not even be possible for staff to leave the jail or prison. Prisoners typically cannot move within a facility without an escort officer and this can cause delays in delivering them to program services. Staff may also need to be escorted and, if an escort is not available, additional delays may occur.

Competition with other programs - Most program services, such as health care, mental health counseling, recreational activities, and family visits typically take place during the daytime hours and inmates are often forced to choose between one or another. Scheduling conflicts can reduce participation rates and delay completion of instructional courses.

Inadequate space - Space for reentry services in most correctional facilities is usually limited, making it difficult to deliver those services in an environment that facilitates communication and personal growth. Competition for the space that is available can be very fierce and can pit one program service against another.

Limits on communication with the outside world - Prohibitions against the use of the Internet and cellular phones can make it difficult to connect inmates to outside resources needed to address their barriers to employment.

Suspicion of "outsiders" - Correctional staff can be suspicious of "outsiders" who enter the facility and this mistrust can prevent the effective delivery of services.

It's all about Being Flexible and Building Partnerships

While these challenges may seem overwhelming at times, there are strategies that you can use to minimize their impact and reach your project's objectives. Of critical importance is the need to build partnerships with correctional staff in much the same way that your program engages

employers and other community partners. The best way to develop a working relationship is to begin by listening. In your initial contact with the correctional facility's leadership, ask them about any concerns they may have about your presence in the facility. Ask them to tell you about the best program they ever worked with. That will give you a sense of what they like to see in a program and gives them a sense that you are interested in meeting their needs.

Correctional facilities usually provide new employees and volunteers with a security briefing. If the facility does not, be sure to ask for one. While security rules can be burdensome, they generally are there for a good reason. Break a rule and you may destroy any trust that exists between your program and the facility's staff. Always keep in mind that the institution has a long and unforgiving memory. While orientation training generally covers the same content across facilities, some points are well worth repeating and are included at the end of this toolkit.

If your project has an advisory committee, determine if a member of the correctional staff is willing and able to serve on it. Tell them that you appreciate their knowledge about the population and would welcome their guidance in your programmatic efforts. Whether they can do this or not, keep facility staff informed of your efforts and accomplishments. Make sure that they know what tasks you are doing, what materials you are bringing into the facility, and how

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Creating Win-Win Situations

A program in a correctional facility was not able to begin its scheduled activities in a timely manner because the escort officer was, more often than not, unavailable at the designated hour. Program staff learned that the escort assignment was rotated between officers who were ordered to perform overtime after working a 12:00 A.M to 8:00 A.M. tour of duty. Rather than complain each time there was a problem, they asked the warden for permission to bring in a coffee pot with the understanding that they would provide the escort officer with a cup of coffee if they arrived promptly at 8:00 AM. Once this was known, they never had a problem with the punctuality of the officer assigned to their project.

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you will be delivering services. To that end, provide the facility's leadership with a loose leaf binder that contains a description of your program, the curriculum, and other related materials. As new materials are developed, provide them with pre-punched pages that can be added to the binder. Make sure that the materials are polished and professional. This will be greatly appreciated by the facility's leadership who are likely to show the binder to visitors and accreditation bodies.

If the facility has a community advisory board, see if you can recruit an employer to serve on it. This will not only strengthen your relationship with the facility's leadership, it will provide them with the guidance on how they can better prepare inmates for the employment opportunities that exist in their community.

To expedite the trust-building process, consider hiring a retired correctional professional on a part-time or full-time basis. If that's not possible, consider enlisting the support of a volunteer who has a correctional background. Either measure can be very helpful, especially if the person is well-known to correctional staff and has a good rapport with the prisoner population. If you don't know one, ask the facility commander. He or she probably will.

There will inevitably be times when your patience is tested by a correctional officer who may or may not be prompt in opening a gate or producing inmates for your program's scheduled activities. You might, in those circumstances, be tempted to complain to a supervisory officer. Don't waste your social capital doing this. The best approach is to smile and say, "Am I glad to see you!"

Make sure that all facility personnel are familiar with your grant's objectives and activities. Some correctional facilities provide in-service training to officers during roll call activities. If this is the case, see if you can address the officers during the time allotted for this training. Institutional orders are often used to brief staff about new policies, procedures, and initiatives. Determine if one describing your project can be distributed to staff. If the facility has a newsletter, offer to write brief article about your program.

Participant Recruitment Strategies

It's a mistake to believe that prisoners will flock to your program once they hear about it and that correctional staff will be eager to help you achieve your grant's recruitment goals. To achieve your recruitment objectives, the facility staff must understand and share your goals. One way to do this is to create a spreadsheet with your project's goals for each month and share that spreadsheet with the facility's leadership on a weekly or monthly basis. If your project was initiated with the support of the correctional agency's leadership or a government official, copy that person on your monthly report. That will give correctional staff added incentive to meet the project's objectives. As these objectives are achieved, acknowledge the facility's contributions through certificates or letters of appreciation. Positive reinforcement will go far toward building support for your recruitment efforts.

Look for multiple ways to reach out to the prisoner population. If the facility has an inmate orientation package, ask for your brochure or flyer to be included in it. Prisoners are more likely to keep a document in their possession if it is printed on card stock that can be folded and kept in their wallet. A branded pocket resume (http://skillsusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Pocketresume.pdf), for example, can serve as a marketing tool and a pre-employment instructional resource. If an orientation session is provided to newly admitted inmates, see if you can be part of it. If a facility has closed circuit television, see if you can air a brief video that describe your program. Post flyers at every allowable location and check periodically to make sure that they remain posted. Some facilities have an inmate council or inmate advisory board. If this is the case, offer to make a presentation to that group in support of your recruitment efforts. It may also be possible to engage inmate as recruiters for your project. If that's the case, talk to the facility's leadership to determine if it is possible to compensate them for their efforts.

Some correctional institutions have a cadre of sentenced inmates who perform maintenance duties. See if it possible to have one of these inmates assigned to your program as an assistant. Many facilities train prisoners to serve as "career clerks" and in that capacity they can be very helpful as recruiters for your program.

Be sure to place you program brochures in the facility's visit areas. If family members are aware of your program, they are likely to encourage the inmates they are visiting to enroll in it.

Coping with the Day-to-Day Challenges of Working in a Correctional Facility

While newly built correctional facilities are usually designed to facilitate the delivery of program services, older generation jails and prisons may not have program space that adequately meets your needs. If the latter is the case, you may need to identify underutilized space or space that can be repurposed in a creative way. Keep in mind, that when space is at a premium, people may not want to share it, even if it is not being used efficiently. If you have developed a strong working relationship with the facility's leadership, seek their support in identifying the space you need. If they can help you find a solution, they are more likely to support it. If space is available in the evening or weekend, be flexible and prepared to take advantage of that opportunity. Another option to consider is the use of a mobile cart that will allow you to deliver services to the housing area.

Seek opportunities to collaborate with educational programs and determine if it is possible to co-locate services. Correctional educators may not be aware of the availability of career exploration videos and computerized career assessment instruments available at no cost from

the U.S. Department of Labor. These resources can add value to correctional education programs and offer opportunities for collaborative efforts.

Even when suitable program space has been arranged, conflicts with other programs and activities may have a negative impact on the delivery of services. The first step in avoiding scheduling conflicts with other programs is to review the facility's program schedule. If it is not possible to avoid scheduling conflicts, consider other alternatives. Is it possible to schedule activities in the evening or weekend? In some cases, program participants can avoid scheduling conflicts through their own efforts. Personal visits can be scheduled for weekends and evenings and the program's activities can be given precedent over recreational activities. Ask participants to sign an agreement to give priority to program activities whenever possible.

Even in the best run correctional facilities, there will be incidents that will interfere with the delivery of program services. It's a good idea to have contingency plans for those circumstances. For example, can material and "homework" assignments be delivered to the housing areas when the facility is locked down? Brainstorm those plans with your staff and correctional facility staff and be prepared to implement them should the need arise.

Improving Communications with the Outside World

The task of connecting justice-involved individuals to employers with job opportunities cannot be accomplished effectively without tapping into the resources available from your state's workforce development system. Because most correctional systems do not allow prisoners to access to the Internet, you'll need to advocate for change and make the case that this can be done without jeopardizing the safety and security of the public. The Montgomery County Correctional Facility has successfully provided its work-release participants with access to Maryland's workforce development system for many years and multimedia materials documenting why and how they did it are available at **[Insert web location here].** If you are seeking to encourage correctional officials to provide this access, these materials can be used to build a powerful case in support of this practice.

Tried and True Practices

- Never make any promises to correctional staff or inmates that you can't keep. Break a promise and you will quickly develop a reputation throughout the facility as being a person who cannot be trusted.
- Be firm, fair, and consistent in your interactions with the prisoner population.
- If you have any questions about what you can or can't do as a service provider, ask for guidance.
- Be ethical. When in doubt, seek guidance and ask yourself the following question: "Would I want my actions to appear in the headline of tomorrow's newspaper?"

Using QR Codes

They appear everywhere these days and are hard to miss. You see them on product packaging, magazine and newspaper ads, billboards, promotional coupons, art gallery exhibits, business cards and much more. They are **QR (Quick Response)** codes, and if you're not using them, you may be missing out on a low-cost way to enhance your recruitment efforts and streamline your program operations.

WHAT ARE QR CODES?

QR Codes are two-dimensional, square shaped symbols that look like a maze. When a QR Code is scanned by a smartphone or a tablet's camera, the user is directed immediately to a specific webpage. Most smartphones come with an application that can be used to scan QR Codes, and free scanning applications are readily available for those that do not. It's very easy to create a QR Code at no cost using online tools, and we've included links to QR Code generators in this bulletin.

WHY SHOULD MY PROGRAM USE QR CODES?

QR Codes offer many exciting opportunities for connecting your program with the growing number of people who are using mobile technology. They allow you to connect with people on-the-go and make it easy for them to find your website. A QR Code can be used to direct a person to an online application form, a downloadable brochure or information sheet, or a social media application such as LinkedIn or Facebook. You could, for example, place a QR Code on your agency brochure with the caption, "learn how our training program can increase your earning capacity" and link it to a webpage that describes the benefits of your program. Or you might want to use a QR code to link to an online application form with the caption "Apply Now!" These uses of QR Codes will streamline the process of providing information to prospective students and reduce the paperwork associated with the application process, a win-win situation for everyone.

Because QR Codes are interactive, they encourage prospective participants to engage in the program in the easiest possible way. They also allow you to track the effectiveness of your

marketing materials, since webpage "hits" can be counted. If each QR Code is linked to a different webpage that has identical content, you can determine how many people sought information in response to a specific brochure, poster, or a promotional item.
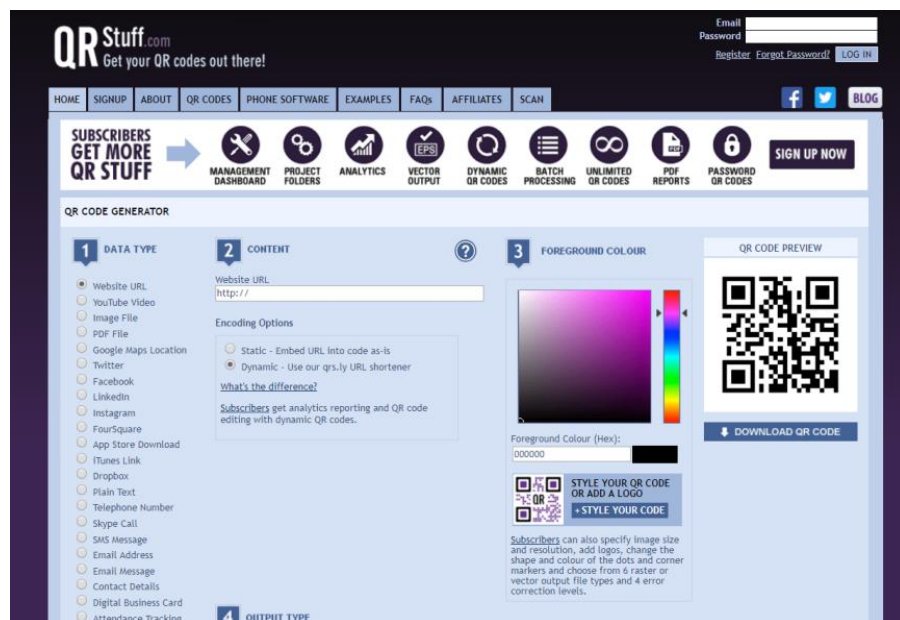
HOW DO I USE A QR CODE?

Your smartphone or tablet probably has a QR Code reader, but if it does not, open the store or marketplace app and do a search on "QR Code." Whether you are using the Android or iOS platform, there are many free apps to choose from.

The process of scanning a QR Code takes a few seconds, and the software you are using will walk you through the process. Try using your smartphone or tablet to scan the above QR Code. Itwill bring you to valuable resources that can help your program achieve better outcomes.

HOW DO I CREATE A QR CODE?

It's very easy to create a QR Code at no cost using code generators found on the Internet. The website captured in the illustration below (http://www.qrstuff.com/) uses a simple 3-step process. You select the data type, enter the website URL and click on "DOWNLOAD QR CODE." This will download the QR Code image which you can copy and paste into a document or save for future use. You'll notice that there are many different types of data codes that can be used.

You can create QR Codes that connect users to YouTube videos, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, contact information, and a host of other data types. This opens up many possibilities for connecting mobile users with your organization's staff and marketing materials.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT I NEED TO KNOW?

Because mobile devices have small screens, make sure that you are directing the user to a website that is mobile friendly. Keep the webpage simple and easy to use. Test it out using the Android and iOS platforms and make sure it works for the user. Here are some more tips:

- Don't assume that people know how to use QR Codes. Offer a brief explanation in language that is easy to understand, and make sure that you give your audience an incentive to scan the code.

- Use it when it makes sense and provides value to your audience. Make sure thatthe QR Code links to information of interest and value, and if it links to a form, ensure that it is easy to complete and submit. If you are going to use it on posters, make sure that cell phone coverage is available in the area.

QR CODE GENERATORS

Here are a few websites that generate QR Codes at no cost. The list is not exhaustive and you may want use a Google search on QR Code generators to see other options.

QR Stuff
http://www.qrstuff.com/index.html

The QR Code Generator
https://www.the-qrcode-generator.com/

Kaywa QR Code
http://qrcode.kaywa.com/

GoQRme
http://goqr.me/

Job Readiness Assessment

Does the program participant have access to:	Yes	No	Comments
a) the documents needed to secure employment?			
b) interview-appropriate clothing?			
c) transportation?			
d) a resume that is up-to-date, complete and error-free?			
e) housing?			
f) health, mental health and/or substance abuse services appropriate to their needs?			
g) minimum of two reliable contact numbers?			
h) child care?			
Can the participant:	Yes	No	Comments
a) identify his job and career goals?			
b) identify his transferable skills?			
c) complete a job application independently?			

	Yes	No	Comments
d) demonstrate the skills needed to interview successfully for employment (a firm handshake, direct eye contact, good posture, a smile, questions for the interviewer, etc.)?			
Does the participant have	**Yes**	**No**	**Comments**
a) good hygiene skills?			
b) a good attitude (avoids making negative statements about self and others)?			
c) good listening skills (responds directly, completely and concisely)?			
d) good motivation (enthusiastic, asks appropriate questions, well mannered, sincere and confident)?			
e) the skills needed to search for employment?			
f) documentation of prison or jail work experience?			
g) the education or credentials needed to achieve their short-term and long-term career goals?			

Career Interest and Values Exploration Activity

Please circle one item in column based on what you prefer.

Work inside	*or*	Work outside
Work alone	*or*	Work with at least another person
Work with ideas	*or*	Work with information
Work directly with people	*or*	Work with machines and tools
Make a lot of money	*or*	Do something I believe is worthwhile
Have a lot of variety	*or*	Follow the same routine
Be told how to do your work	*or*	Tell others how to do their work
Create a product	*or*	Develop an idea or plan
Work in a logical, step-by-step way	*or*	Work in a spontaneous way
Make a good living	*or*	Make a good life

Helping Justice-Involved Individuals Secure Work that Pays a Living Wage

Sample Questions for Structured Interviews

Work

- How do you feel about not working now?
- What would be the best things about having a job or having a better job?
- What problems make working difficult for you?
- If you could have your ideal job, what would it look like?
- What did you like/dislike most about your previous jobs?

Education

- How do you feel about the amount of education you have right now?
- How will your present level of education affect your ability to get the kind of jobs you want?
- How would you feel about going back to school now?
- What is the biggest drawback to your returning to school?
- What kinds of training would interest you?

Change

- What would you like to change most about your life now?
- If you could make one change now, what would it be?
- What keeps you from making this change?
- What could help you make this change?

Goals

- Where do you see yourself a year from now? Five years from now?
- If you could have a good life for yourself and your family, what would that be?

Labor Market Information Worksheet

You may select any occupation for this analysis or choose among those that have been identified as having high growth potential. If you choose to do the latter, please visit:

http://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Industries/IndustriesWhatsHot.aspx

to identify high growth and emerging industries as well as individual in-demand occupations for your state.

What are the common job titles for the occupation?

Source of this information: General knowledge, job announcements, employers

What is the occupational title(s) that most closely describes the above occupations? What is the occupational description in the Occupational Outlook Handbook? (This is the occupation and description for which the data below will describe)

Occupational Title	**Description**

Source of this information: Please see Occupational Information Handbook.

What is the current number of jobs in the occupation(s)?

Occupational Title	Current Employment		
	Region	Statewide	Nation

Source of this information: For regional and state data, please visit your state's LMI Website (https://www.bls.gov/bls/ofolist.htm). For national and local data, visit http://www.careeronestop.org/LMI/LMIHome.asp. Click on "Occupational Profile," then enter the occupation or choose from a menu search. Choose your state and then click "continue" to obtain the information.

What is the 10-year growth rate for this occupation?

Occupational Title	10 Year Growth Rate		
	Region	State	Nation

Source of this information: For regional and state data, please visit your state's LMI Website (https://www.bls.gov/bls/ofolist.htm). For national and local data, visit http://www.careeronestop.org/LMI/LMIHome.asp. Click on "Occupational Profile," then enter the

occupation or choose from a menu search. Choose your state and then click "continue" to obtain the information.

State occupational projections can also be found here: http://www.projectionscentral.com/.

What is the average annual (replacement and growth) job openings expected over the next 10 years in this occupation?

Occupational Title	Average Annual Openings		
	Region	State	Nation

Source of this information: For regional and state data please visit your state's LMI Website. For national and local data, visit http://www.careeronestop.org/LMI/LMIHome.asp. Click on "Occupational Profile," then enter the occupation or choose from a menu search. Choose your state and then click "continue" to obtain the information.

Is a license required by the state to perform this occupation?

Yes ⎯
No ⎯

If yes, does this license have any requirements that might exclude persons with criminal convictions from being employed in this occupation?

Yes ⎯
No ⎯

Source of this information:

https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/Training/find-licenses.aspx

Select your state and then search by occupation. Click on the license name to obtain detailed information. You will need to contact the licensing authority to determine if the occupation excludes persons with criminal convictions.

Is there a certification for this occupation?

Yes __
No __

If yes, does this certification have any requirements that might exclude persons with criminal convictions from being employed in this occupation?

Yes __
No __

Source of this information: Please visit:

https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/Training/find-certifications.aspx

Enter the occupation and click on the search button.

You will need to contact the certification authority to determine if the occupation excludes persons with criminal convictions.

Are there any federal occupational restrictions that might exclude persons with criminal convictions from being employed in this occupation?

Yes __
No __

For information regarding federal occupational restrictions affecting people with criminal records, please click on the following link:

http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/pardon/legacy/2006/11/13/collateral_consequences.pdf

Are there any state or local restrictions that might exclude persons with criminal convictions from being employed in this occupation?

Yes __
No __

For information regarding state or local occupational restrictions affecting people with criminal records, please visit: https://niccc.csgjusticecenter.org/

What are the <u>minimum</u> educational requirements for the related occupation(s)?

(On-the-job Training, Work Experience, Post-secondary, Apprenticeship, Certificate of Completion, Associate, Bachelor's)

Occupational Title	Minimum Educational Requirement

Source of this information: Occupational Outlook Handbook at https://www.bls.gov/ooh/.
Choose the occupation, then click on the "How to Become One" tab.

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What are the <u>competitive</u> educational requirements for the related occupation(s)? (Work Experience, Post-secondary, Apprenticeship, Associate, Bachelor's, and/or a combination.)

Occupational Title	Competitive Educational Requirement

Source of this information: Occupational Outlook Handbook at https://www.bls.gov/ooh/.
Choose the occupation, then click on the "How to Become One" tab.

Potential wages for this occupation

	Entry (use 10th percentile if available)	Avg. (use median if available)	High (use 90th percentile if available)
State			
National			

Source of this information: Please visit: http://www.careeronestop.org/LMI/LMIHome.asp. Click on "Occupational Profile," then enter the occupation or choose from a menu search. Choose

your state and then click "continue" to obtain the information under the heading, "State and National Wages."

Do the average potential wages for this occupation in your state exceed Federal Poverty Guidelines?

Number of Family Members	1	2	3	4	5	6
National Poverty Guidelines						
Avg. Income (use median if available)						

Source of this information: Please visit: http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/figures-fed-reg.shtml for the Federal Poverty Guides set every year by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Are there resources that list, describe, or are based on competencies, such as curriculum, assessment instruments, skill standards, apprenticeship work process schedules, and certification requirements for this occupation?

Source of this information: Please visit:
http://www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/search.aspx?N=0 to search for resources.

Are there short-term training opportunities for this occupation?

Source of this information: Please visit:
http://www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/Find/Short-TermTraining.aspx to identify short-term training opportunities for a particular occupation.

Are there apprentice opportunities for this occupation?

Source of this information: Please visit: https://www.dol.gov/featured/apprenticeship/find-opportunities to identify apprenticeship opportunities.

Does a local institution of higher education provide a course of instruction related to this occupation?

Source of this information: Please visit: http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/ to build a list of schools and make a side-by-side comparison.

Employer Survey

1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with our services?

    a. Very satisfied
    b. Somewhat satisfied
    c. Neither satisfied nor not satisfied
    d. Some dissatisfied
    e. Very dissatisfied

2. How well did our services meet your human resource needs?

    a. Extremely well
    b. Very well
    c. Somewhat well
    d. Not so well
    e. Not at all well

3. How responsive have we been to your questions or concerns about our services?

    a. Extremely responsive
    b. Very responsive
    c. Somewhat responsive
    d. Not so responsive
    e. Not at all responsive
    f. Not applicable

How likely is it that you would recommend our services to another employer?

Not at all likely									Extremely Likely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Do you any other comments, questions, concerns?

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Training Participant Survey

1. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your educational experience?

   a. Very positive
   b. Somewhat positive
   c. Somewhat negative
   d. Very negative

2. How well did we provide you with guidance and support?

   a. Extremely well
   b. Somewhat well
   c. Not so well
   d. Not at all well

3. Overall, how would you rate the quality of our program's job placement assistance?

   a. Very positive
   b. Somewhat positive
   c. Somewhat negative
   d. Very negative

4. Considering all of the expectations you may have had about our services, to what extent have the services met your expectations?

   a. Exceeded my expectations
   b. Met my expectations
   c. Fell short of my expectations
   d. Did not meet my expectations at all

5. How likely is it that you would recommend our training program to a friend?

Not at all likely									Extremely Likely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Do you any other comments, questions, concerns?

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Financial Resources Guide

Financial guidance services are activities designed to increase a person's ability to manage financial resources effectively. They may include educational workshops, coaching, credit counseling and building, access to low-cost financial products, tax preparation assistance, and access to Federal and State benefits. Whether you choose to provide these services directly to training participants or indirectly through a partnership or referral, it is useful to have access to financial guidance resources that can be shared with participants as needs arise. The following resources are available at low or no-cost.

ASK CFPB (HTTP://WWW.CONSUMERFINANCE.GOV/ASKCFPB/)—Ask CFPB is an interactive tool on the website of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that provides answers to common financial questions. Questions are organized into categories such as "credit reports and scores," "debt collection," and other topics that may be of interest and value to program participants.

YOUR MONEY, YOUR GOALS TOOLKIT (HTTP://WWW.CONSUMERFINANCE.GOV/YOUR-MONEY-YOUR-GOALS/)— This toolkit, offered by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, can be used by grantees to help participants set goals, choose financial products, and build skills in managing money, credit, and debt.

FDIC MONEY SMART (HTTP://WWW.FDIC.GOV/CONSUMERS/CONSUMER/MONEYSMART/INDEX.HTML)—Money Smart is the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's financial education curriculum designed for low- and moderate-income individuals. It is available in several versions including a self-paced, computer-based instruction format.

HUD APPROVED HOUSING COUNSELING AGENCIES (HTTP://WWW.HUD.GOV/FINDACOUNSELOR)—The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides information on where to locate local housing counseling agencies that provide free or low cost guidance on foreclosure avoidance, credit issues, reverse mortgages, and other topics that may be of interest to program participants.

PERSONAL BUDGETING WORKSHEET (HTTP://WWW.CONSUMER.FTC.GOV/ARTICLES/PDF-1020-MAKE-BUDGET-WORKSHEET.PDF)—This worksheet from the Federal Trade Commission can help users evaluate

which of their expenses are flexible and which are fixed. It can give them an idea of how they are spending their money and changes they can make to improve their financial situation.

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA) (HTTP://IRS.TREASURY.GOV/FREETAXPREP/)—The VITA program provides no-cost tax help to people who generally make $54,000 or less, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR CREDIT COUNSELING (HTTPS://WWW.NFCC.ORG/INDEX.PHP)—The National Foundation for Credit Counseling can be used to search for member agencies that provide credit and budget counseling, bankruptcy counseling, or housing counseling in person, by phone, or online.

MANAGING YOUR PERSONAL FINANCES IN TOUGH TIMES (HTTP://FYI.UWEX.EDU/TOUGHTIMES/)—To help people make sound financial choices in tough times, this website was developed by the Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Financial Education to provide resources.